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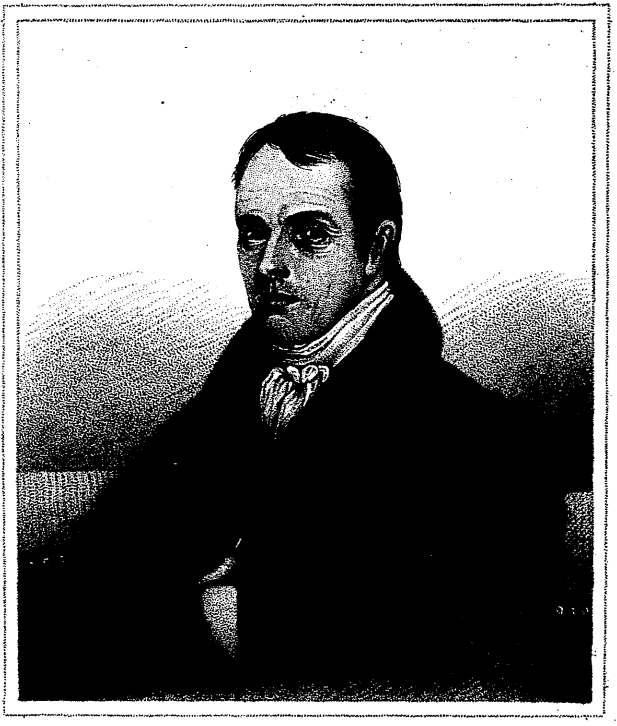

Rev. Charles Giles.

Fried. Schiller. fils.

PIONEER:

A

NARRATIVE

OF THE

NATIVITY, EXPERIENCE, TRAVELS, AND MINISTERIAL LABOURS

OF

REV. CHARLES GILES,

Author of the "Triumph of Truth," etc.

WITH

INCIDENTS, OBSERVATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

Some readers are delighted with the biographies of good and intelligent persons, in every condition in life; others seem enraptured only with those which exhibit the achievements of renowned personages, who, by the control of events, or rare endowments, have been enabled to figure in the high departments of the world. But, as the traveller, after satisfying his curiosity in climbing over the Andes or Alpine Mountains, grows weary with his unnatural elevation, and gladly leaves it to enjoy the more delightful regions below; so those readers, though charmed for awhile with the sport, in following princes in their pompous movements, or heroes over fields of blood and carnage, become weary, at last, with these scenes of high life, and choose for a relief to follow the more auspicious track of others in different and lower stations in the world.

In a religious biography the reader expects to find an account of the responsible part acted by the

person himself; the treatment he has received from his fellow-men, together with his Christian experience; and how Providence has attended him from year to year. So these works are chiefly designed to proclaim the power of grace; and to show the various gifts and dealings of God to the children of men, in the economy of salvation. Though these gracious bestowments come from one source, and for the same end, the administrations are wonderfully diversified: hence the wisdom and goodness of God are not only apparent in the condition of those who are in the high departments of the church; but are as clearly discovered in the lives of the obscure and lowly. In the same manner we see the power of God as fully exhibited in a twinkling star, as in the sun;—in a grain of sand, as in a mountain;—in a rose or violet, as in a spreading oak, or towering cedar. So the care and goodness of God can be traced to every living mortal, not excepting the evil and unthankful: for his tender mercies are over all his works. Even if the fluttering sparrow could write her own biography, she could tell a pleasing story concerning the common mercies of Heaven to her.

By sacred vows of consecration the author surrendered himself to God, in his youth, to be a servant to the church and the world. And during

his pilgrimage so far, he has been a favoured subject of divine Providence; learned many things by experience which he could not have learned otherwise; travelled many years to proclaim the gospel; formed an extensive acquaintance with men and manners; seen the power of truth triumph over sin and error; passed through many vicissitudes of joy and sorrow; and, with painful emotions, attended many of his fellow-mortals to the tomb. But after all, he cannot foretel what opinions the world will form respecting his motives, or course of life; nor is he anxious to know. It has truly been his ruling object, "*to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.*" Among the rules of life by which his acts have been governed, this has been a prominent one: *Always to try to do good, and to avoid doing harm*: by which efforts he hoped to lessen the miseries of the world, and increase its happiness: for the accomplishment of this desirable object his strength and talents have been employed. But what amount of good he has done in the world, eternity may tell. He, however, does cherish this consolation, that if his labours have not made the condition of the world any better, it is probably no worse in consequence of his existence in it.

Many of the events recorded in this Narrative

were printed deeply in the author's memory; and others were committed to writing. But he had formed no design to present to the public a work of this kind till recently. The solicitations of some intimate friends brought the matter under consideration; and, after deliberating on the subject awhile, he was induced to believe that many things that have occurred in the course of his life, if published to the world, would be interesting to some, and instructive and beneficial to others, in passing along over the rough bridge of life, in the same world of care, toil, and perplexity.

Whatever the writer has done worthy of imitation he sincerely hopes will be remembered; and whatever errors he has been led into for the want of perfect knowledge and foresight, he believes will be covered by the soft mantle of charity. The whole, therefore, is submitted to the candid and inquiring public with becoming deference and respect.

THE AUTHOR.

PIONEER.

CHAPTER I.

Nativity—War terminated—Parentage—Condition of the country—Moral training—Early impressions—Religion in New-England—My father's state of mind—Age of Reason—Popular doctrines—Infidelity—Mr. Coffin and Mr. Ballou—Deism and Universalism compared—Mr. Huntington—Pilgrim's Progress—A dream—Early sensibilities—Dread of death—Three incidents—Love of nature.

In the transit of reflection to return to the place of one's nativity, to call up the distant associations of youthful days, and then follow up the mazy course of life, unavoidably awakens intense and mingled emotions. There, at the base of life's rugged eminence, the hand of Providence, that often works unseen, can be evidently traced amidst the changes of time, through joys and sorrows, along the diversified path of childhood. There, I also see how parental kindness, one of the last things to be forgotten, watched with anxious hopes and distressing fears, by night and day, over my infancy and juvenile years. How cold and base the heart must be that feels no gratitude for the tender care bestowed by indulgent parents! A grateful feeling is more precious than gold in the esteem of a benevolent friend; but ingratitude falls on the bosom of a kind protector with a paralyzing influence.

New-England, the land of the Pilgrims, renowned

for romantic hills and cultured valleys, is associated with my affections. In the state of Connecticut, near Fort Griswold, a place distinguished in the history of the revolution, lies the humble place of my nativity. On the 22d of Feb., 1783, I became a member of the human family amidst the elements of sin and misery; and that, too, at the memorable period when the revolutionary troubles were approaching toward a happy termination. The sound of triumphant rejoicings, which arose on account of that auspicious event, passed over me unnoticed, as I lay in my cradle, "pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw."

When this desirable period arrived, a proclamation was sounded, throughout the martial ranks, requiring a cessation of hostilities in conformity to the ratified treaty of peace between the realm of Great Britain and the United States of America. A happy change then began to be visible: the stormy aspect of the revolution soon rolled away; proud armies met each other on the line of equality, passed the signals of peace, and became social friends. So these disastrous commotions soon sunk down into a political calm. But, fortunately for me, by the order of Providence, I was born too late to hear the direful sound of those perilous conflicts, or to see the bloody battle-fields, and appalling conflagrations, which distinguished those days of national calamity.

The inhabitants of New-England have been justly renowned for enterprise, industry, and perseverance: these traits of character were apparent in all their political and domestic operations; and so strong was the influence of practical education among them, that these

habits became interwoven thoroughly in every class of community. Being trained according to these customs of the country, my parents early formed habits of industry and economy. Idleness they considered a violation of the laws of reason, nature, and Providence; but industry, a duty, enjoined by the mandate of the Creator. Agriculture engaged my father's early attention for the support of his growing family: a calling which he deemed no less honourable than useful. Besides, he possessed a tact for the business; and was very particular and systematical in the management of everything; which, in turn, won him proverbial honours among his neighbours. He was not only endowed with a strong physical constitution; but he also possessed a penetrating intellect; and was much delighted with reading, and conversing with persons of information and intelligence. But he was often heard to lament that, while in youth, his opportunities for acquiring an education had been so limited. The importance of learning was obvious to him, both for the exhibition of native talent, and for extensive usefulness in the world. Hence he was resolved to do all that he could to promote the education of his children. The expense he endured with pleasure, while he saw them advancing in the pursuit of useful knowledge.

Though encouragements were beginning to open for enterprise and improvement, still the country, at that early period, was furnished only with a few endowed institutions of learning; and these, many, for the want of means, could not reach. But the common branches were open to all, and were universally pursued; while

the higher and ornamental branches were chiefly left for prouder days, and greater resources of wealth. Moreover, the country, at that time, was destitute of many of the useful institutions, and benevolent societies, which now extend their fostering influences to every section of the nation.

It is confessed that much was wanting then in community to mould and beautify the elements of mind and morals; still there were some things connected with those early days of simplicity, which, though now abandoned, were superior to many of the changes in society that are falsely called improvements. The people stood then more generally upon a level; were more plain and artless in their dress and equipage. And, as a natural consequence, the demand was much less for the gewgaws and fashions of the old world. The affected feverish spirit that now pervades almost every class of society, was then only partially known. There was less inclination to envy and dissimulation—men were more true to their engagements: man seemed more like a brother to man. The inducements to adventure in wild speculations were at that day comparatively small; hence, men were more resigned to their condition, and contented with their proper calling. There was less travelling then; and the people formed fewer acquaintances; so their friendships, desires, and purposes, were formed on local plans. And, by the law of necessity, they were taught to be industrious and economical;—which is, after all, the true philosophy of living: the direct way to be useful, happy, and independent.

My parents, at this early period, were not professors

of religion. They, nevertheless, had a high respect for the canons of morality, which was obviously seen in their daily walk: they carried out their moral principles everywhere, and in everything; which had a powerful sway on my tender mind. Though I was but a child, their example was a law sufficiently strong, without any direct precept, to hold entire control over my determinations and actions; such were the love and reverence I had for them.

Morality, though not true religion, is nevertheless closely allied to it: the power of its philosophy binds the wayward passions, holds the mind in check, and imprints the lineaments of dignity and propriety on human character. Without morality human nature becomes degraded, and sinks below the brute;—a mournful sight indeed!

To be trained up with moral examples ever in view, mingled with the endearment of parental affection, is a high privilege, which children rarely know how to prize. Though others may take a different view of the subject; still, to me, it appears a fortunate circumstance that I was kept, in the early part of my life, under the watchful eye of parents who had a high respect for the moral law. What course I should have taken, if the circumstances of my training had been otherwise, I cannot tell. But, as far back as I can remember, a moral feeling of right and wrong so influenced my mind, that sin appeared to me not only disgraceful, but ruinous. The common, low, vulgar practice of profane swearing I abhorred. Yes, the sound of any unhallowed expression wounded my feelings, then, as it would now; and on such occasions,

my disapprobation was often expressed in timorous, child-like reproofs. My father's example was invariably against the practice; still some of his workmen frequently uttered unhallowed exclamations, which I was occasionally obliged to hear.

I well recollect, that when a small lad, I was set to drive the oxen in subduing a stony field; and, in the course of operation, the plough was frequently thrown from its furrow by the stones: the young man, who was holding the instrument, often, while irritated, uttered some profane words, which disgusted me exceedingly. Hence, I mildly requested him to tell me what good was produced by such expressions? He briefly replied thus: "To plough such stony ground is enough to make a minister swear."

One day, while running across a field, I accidentally wounded my foot, and, in my distress, I inadvertently uttered a wicked exclamation. How I was influenced to do that which I abhorred in my heart I never could tell. A sense of horror and guilt immediately ensued. The disapprobation of Heaven, like a cloud, seemed to hang over my head, while the pit of destruction appeared to yawn beneath my feet. With all my heart I implored mercy; and solemnly promised the Lord, who alone heard me, that I would never so violate his holy law again; and it seemed to me that he instantly granted an answer to my request.

Moreover, while in the days of boyhood, the sentiment was deeply imprinted on my mind, that the righteous would be happy in the future world, and the wicked would be wretched there. This impression was not made by the type of instruction; for I have

no recollection that my parents ever attempted to establish in the minds of their children a belief in any particular religious tenets; for, at that time, it was evident they were not settled themselves on any religious system. Nor were the notions of human agency, rewards and punishments hereafter, produced, in my mind, by the ministry of orthodox preachers. These apprehensions, like my attendant shadow, followed me as far back as my memory can reach, even before I attended church—children were then often left at home. Nor did I then understand the high origin of these sacred impressions: we were not questioned on such vital subjects; nor was any personal instruction given, not even by ministers when they visited us. The cloud of moral darkness which then overspread the land was great and fearful.

In those days the religion of New-England consisted chiefly in hollow form. The sabbath was rigorously observed, and the formalities of public worship highly venerated by many. But holy living, deep piety, and experimental religion, were matters not critically understood by the multitude; and hence rarely found a place among the common subjects of conversation.

In years elapsed the community had been aroused from their moral slumbers by the thunder of Mr. Whitefield's eloquence. But many of the subjects of that reformation, who truly emerged from moral darkness into spiritual light and life, being left to the guidance of formal, cold-hearted teachers, soon copied their spirit, became moulded into their formality, and so lost their identity, as spiritual children of the devoted Whitefield. So, in a great measure, the glory of that

reformation passed away with the roll of a few changeful years, leaving only some monumental churches behind to tell that the people once enjoyed better days.

To doubt and discard everything that the mind cannot comprehend is known to have a delusive tendency. This probably was one of my father's greatest errors. A superficial view of things was not satisfactory to him. The natural ruling inclination of his mind was, to search for a key to unlock the *arcana* of *nature, religion,* and *Providence.* Hence he laboured to analyze every subject; to investigate everything to the bottom; and wanted to comprehend all the mysteries which appeared, in his view, before he was willing to believe the facts. Many things, in the compass of experimental religion, to his doubting mind, were dark and mysterious; and some of the facts, recorded in the Scriptures, were above his comprehension; therefore, in accordance with his views, he was inclined to doubt the authenticity of some parts of the sacred oracles. So, by the power of false philosophy, he was driven to the dark verge of the vortex of infidelity. The fact is obvious, that the affinity which exists between the carnal mind and infidelity causes their unhappy combination: such occurrences have been common in all ages.

It was evident that my father, at this time, was not resting on any system of faith. He presumed that there was solid ground on which his mind could rest, but knew not in what field of observation it lay. He therefore adopted a free mode of thinking for himself, and concluded to let others think also for themselves,

till the right way could be discovered. So his mind was kept continually vacillating from theory to theory, like a bee flying over the wide common from flower to flower: hence he only imposed on his children moral and secular restraints; beyond these they were left free to think for themselves, to examine principles, and form conclusions; and to read such books as they were disposed to select. We had the Bible, and any one had liberty to read it by night or day. And, among other books, we had Paine's Age of Reason, a meagre, infidel work; which seemed too low and vulgar to be the emanation of an enlightened, noble mind.

Thomas Paine was unquestionably endowed with a strong intellect: all who have read his political essays have freely awarded him that distinction. But in his Age of Reason, where he attempted to refute the Bible, he exhibited the baseness of his heart, together with the black dross of his weakest thoughts. Yet with all its absurdities, coming from the pen of a distinguished fellow-citizen, also from one of the strong advocates for political liberty, it had a brief popularity. Many in community wished to gratify their curiosity by perusing the impious wonder. Hence it found its way into New-England, and to my father's house, where everything was read that came to hand, the Age of Reason not excepted. But I was too young to be influenced any way by such hollow, stale sophistry, as appeared in that work. Some detached sentences of it still remain in my recollection. But, in the narrow limits of my observation, it did not appear that the validity of the Holy Bible was, in the least, impaired

by that production. True, as before stated, the work at first excited a strong sensation in the public mind, and became the subject of much conversation—some contended for it, and others against it, till it lost its novelty; then it sunk among the rubbish, to be forgotten.

In those days the New-England pulpits teemed with the most rigid Calvinistic divinity. The doctrine of *necessity* stood, in bold relief, on the front of the public ministrations. That "God for his own glory hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," seemed to be the foundation on which the sacred order stood. Hence, they boldly taught that part of mankind were elected, or otherwise, created for happiness, and so encircled with fatality that it was not in their power to defeat the end—the rest of the world passed by, or otherwise, made for the exhibition of divine sovereignty, with the doom of reprobation on them, before they were born, without any power to escape it. And the number in each class made so definite that it could not be increased or diminished. So any reprobate dying in infancy must be cast into hell to writhe in endless despair, and that, too, not for actual or inherent sin, seen in them by their Creator, but only to show his glorious power and justice.

This doctrinal *picture*, with all these horrific features, was designed to represent the character and government of God—the *great*, *wise*, and *holy* God of *love*. The outlines of the picture were drawn in the Confession of Faith; which received every argumentative *tint*, *light*, and *shadow*, which the learning and skill of the popular preachers of that day could bestow.

To many of the reasoners out of the Calvinistic school,

the broad assumption, that "God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass," appeared to be fraught with gross absurdity. To their understanding, if the doctrine were true, the final *judgment* would be only an empty, useless ceremony: for the high control that fixed the fatality of all things decided, at the same time, the eternal destiny of all mankind. So every chosen child of Adam being predestinated, or elected, to life, was consequently, at that moment, adjudged to be an heir of heaven; and every one, created for reprobation, was irreversibly doomed that instant to an endless hell. Therefore the great judgment day will not reverse or change any of the fates of men that were determined before the creation of the world.

Moreover, they conceived that the dread doctrine of predestination not only made the general judgment void, but nullified the doctrine of man's moral agency and accountability. For if the thoughts, words, and acts of men were foreordained, the conclusion is fallacious that they do anything voluntarily. If predestination reigns over the intellectual world, and over everything, its operation is like a vast complicated piece of machinery: no power below the Deity can arrest its course; no finite being can disturb any part of its secret concatenation, or break the smallest fibre in the web of destiny. The laws of predestination are absolute; they never were broken, nor can they ever be broken. Hence, there can be no transgression, nor anything in the likeness of sin. Predestination does everything that is done; and everything that is done is right—nothing that comes to pass is wrong. The sinner then cannot repent, for he has

broken no decree; hence, he cannot mourn for anything he has done. He can only feel sorrow that God foreordained that he should break his holy law. He cannot pray for pardon, because he needs no pardon for doing what God determined he should do. So they reasoned on the doctrines.

The peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, however, were embraced by the most distinguished sects of Christians, at that time; though many out of these churches believed that the nature and tendency of the doctrines were but partially understood, even among themselves. But it was deemed a great advance toward infidelity for any one to question the truth of the doctrines, or to attempt to bring reasons to bear against them. Education and common consent had a great tendency to give this *creed* of the land popularity. And, withal, the respect and reverence generally maintained, in the religious community, for the supposed infallibility of the learned clergy, excluded all grounds for doubt and inquiry, as if their faith were "the end of all perfection."

But some at that day, who were unbiased by education, stumbled over these doctrines into the dark waste of infidelity; and with apparent disgust openly said: "If the doctrines of predestination, particular election, and reprobation, be the doctrines of the Bible, we are disposed to disown it, and embrace a system of faith more compatible with the principles of reason and common sense: if the Bible teaches us that the almighty Being is partial in his government, unjust and cruel, we are resolved not to believe the book." Thus, many besides my father were inclined to doubt,

and remained for some time in that unhappy state, vacillating between the repulsive dogmas of Calvinism and the wild speculations of Deistical philosophy. Hence, Paine's Age of Reason was read with critical attention. But the author's style, and his mode of reasoning, were not pleasing to some of his readers, and his theory was pronounced, "frost-bitten ground" by others.

In this commotion of thought and sentiment some appeared to remain indifferent; many settled on the sand-bank of infidelity, while others took shelter under the more plausible doctrine of final restoration; and with others my father, at length, embraced the specious theory of Universalism proper. Though it was merely a cloud of sophistical darkness, he imagined that it was a body of light. He therefore exulted in the decision he had made, confidently believing that he had found the right way. He argued strongly in favour of the scheme, and recommended it to all around as an infallible remedy for a guilty conscience, and the fear of a future hell. Influenced by such views, together with earthly motives, some of his neighbours were induced to come over and unite with him in building up the liberal faith on the new platform.

Michael Coffin and Hosea Ballou were then active young men, travelling at large, and preaching the doctrine of Universalism. They came occasionally into Groton, and preached in our neighbourhood, where they found a friendly reception, and made some proselytes. I well recollect their mode of illustrating the Holy Scriptures; and the peculiar points of doctrine which they laboured to establish. They substantially

taught, "that internal happiness is secured, unconditionally, to all mankind by the mediation of Christ—that angels never fell from heaven; and that Satan is nobody—nothing but phosphorus, or Jack with a lantern—that the day of judgment is past, and a future hell of misery is only an artful bugbear invented by the orthodox priests to keep the people in awe."

The following expressions are fragments of some of Mr. Coffin's lectures, which are introduced here merely to show the reader his style, and manner of teaching, together with his sentiments. He said, "Some people make hell their fence, and the devil their bull-dog to scare their children into heaven." "You all believe that David of old was a good man; but he fell into the pit, and exclaimed, 'The pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.' Now," said the preacher, "if you will rescue David, I will pull you out and the rest of the world." Moreover he said, "That it would be in vain for a farmer to go to the frog-ponds in January, and call upon the frogs to come forth and peep, to bring on an early spring, that his hay might hold out. Only let him wait till the spring opens, then the sun will thaw the ice, and the frogs will come out and peep. So it is equally vain to call upon sinners to repent, for they are now like the frogs imprisoned in ice. But when the Sun of righteousness shall arise, with melting rays of love, he will break up the frozen hearts of sinners; then they will repent, and not before." A lady asked the preacher, "What will become of the finally impenitent?" "Madam," said he, "if the sinner can hold out longer than the Almighty can, he may go anywhere." So nothing could be done,

according to his showing, to advance the salvation of any one. But the work would finally be accomplished for all, by an irresistible power, whenever the Almighty should be disposed to have it done.

The doctrines which these teachers inculcated accorded, generally, with the gross philosophy of the infidel school. They ridiculed the history of the fall of man—Eve's eating an apple at the instigation of the serpent: in doing which they merely echoed the language of the infidel. They asserted that man stands now as he stood at first: his character and relation to his Maker remain unaltered. So the Scripture doctrine of original, hereditary impurity, they discarded with a laugh, as Deists generally do. The new birth, the renovation of the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit, they solved by the rules of infidelity. "What has this pretender, who has been born again, above other men?" said Mr. Ballou, "he breathes the same air, and lives on the same kind of food," &c. They ascribed to Jesus Christ no attributes above the level of created humanity; which opinion corresponds exactly with the common Deistical belief. To pray to God for pardon and grace is a usage despised by infidels; and these Universalist preachers, also, believed that it was a useless ceremony. Still they conformed to the custom so far as to open their meetings by prayer, or rather, by a thanksgiving speech, because the prejudices of education were so strongly in favour of the practice. Their views also of the fall of angels, the personality of the devil, the general judgment, and a future state of misery, were in agreement with the sentiments of the infidel world on these subjects.

These preachers of Universalism, nevertheless, professed to believe the Bible, which the Deists with more frankness and honesty deny.

My father addressed Mr. Coffin, at one time, in the following manner:—"Sir, I do not see but little difference between the doctrine you preach and Paine's Age of Reason." Coffin replied, "That there was not much difference; and that the time would soon come when all Universalism would be swallowed up in Deism."

It is obvious to every observing eye, that Deistical sentiments never did improve the moral sensibilities, nor change the impious habits of those who embrace them. And all who are acquainted with the unhappy effects of the principles of Universalism on their adherents are compelled to form the same conclusion also respecting that doctrine. The natural tendency of these theories, and all others of a kindred cast, is to blind the mental sight, stupify the conscience, and cause it to sleep, by discarding the fear of future consequences. If these theories were radically good and true they would produce good moral effects on those who embrace them, and are guided by their influence: for a good cause will naturally produce good effects. A turbid fountain will send forth turbid streams. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. So many of the more serious class in community thought and reasoned, at that time.

It is however just and proper to remark, that though erroneous principles have a tendency to make those who embrace them turn off into moral obliquities, still they do not always make perceptible changes in the

conduct of those who were before established in a course of rectitude. I have been acquainted with some professed infidels who were regarded as moral, honest men, by their neighbours; but their morality and honesty were not the effects of their principles; they were the same, in character, before they espoused them. And it is moreover just to add, that my father was so well confirmed in moral habits before he consulted the liberal creed of Universalism, that his belief in it made no perceptible change in his course of life afterward.

My mother was a kind, considerate woman, not disposed to be charmed with novel theories; therefore, these ministers laboured in vain to persuade her to believe their creed. Mr. Coffin, one day, in addressing her, said, "that she was so good and moral he could warrant her a safe passage to heaven." But she replied in terms that expressed her doubts of the safety of her condition—I recollect how serious my mother looked when she made the reply. And I can say, that all the preaching and arguing which fell on my ears, in defence of Universalism, produced no change in my views with regard to the future judgment day, or the end of the wicked.

Among the changes which characterized those days, Mr. Huntington, of Coventry, a minister of the established order, thought that the articles, in his creed, of particular election, and the future misery of the impenitent, were erroneous. Hence these principles he renounced, in his own mind, but kept the change in his sentiments a secret from his congregation; which, though not strictly honest, was nevertheless good worldly

policy, for by so doing he secured his needful salary for life. Soon after his death a book appeared, bearing this specious title, "*Calvinism Improved*," which showed clearly how the enterprising talents of this learned minister had improved the short chain of his election creed, by adding link to link, till, by elongation, it grew into Universalism, and encircled all mankind—Christians, moralists, infidels, blasphemers, idolaters, assassins, adulterers, pirates, knaves—and bound them all together in one common brotherhood, by a changeless, unseen law of fatality, securing complete and endless happiness to all mankind.

When the work was discovered and published to the world, it raised a mighty wind among the moral elements. The high standing of its author in his own church, together with the confidence reposed in him as a stanch believer in the popular creed of the country, excited strange sensations in community, and sent a shock of amazement among his orthodox brethren. It was also an event that caused much triumph among those who believed in the final salvation of all men. But this work, like other novelties, had its rise, its influence, and passed away to slumber among the things forgotten, in the lapse of years.

While at a neighbour's house I saw, for the first time, Pilgrim's Progress, which attracted my attention greatly; and to gratify my curiosity I borrowed the book, and read it with much interest. The plain and easy similitudes which abound in the work, together with its pictorial illustrations, opened the subject of human depravity, and the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, so plainly to my understanding, that I felt the

force of the truth they were designed to communicate. And as I advanced in the consideration of the subject, I learned some things which were new to me; things that I deemed important. Hence I desired others to participate with me in the matter. I said nothing, however, concerning my feelings to any one; but spoke in favour of the book I had been reading to my sister Anna, who was older than myself, and full of youthful vivacity. I mildly expressed a desire that she would read the book. She instantly replied, "O yes, I will read it." But the tone of her voice, together with her airy manner, affected my mind deeply. I, however, let the matter pass, and said no more. Whether she read the book or not, I do not recollect.

While these impressions followed me I had a dream, in which the tremendous day of judgment was opened to my view. The dread tribunal appeared before me, and the Judge was seated upon his throne. A solemn crowd of human beings was gathered and gathering, and passing off to the right, or to the left, as the irrevocable sentence was passed. Not a word was spoken that reached my ear—a dreadful silence reigned. As I passed along toward the judgment seat, my mind was oppressed with anxiety and fears for myself and others in the crowd. After a momentary pause, without a word being spoken, I was permitted to turn to the right; thence I ascended, by an inclined passage, to a higher region. Instantly there opened on my wondering gaze an immeasurable field of delightful space: after casting a hasty glance over the scene, my attention was arrested by a sound of music advancing toward me, but at a great distance.

The music was so unearthly, melodious, and inspiring, that I immediately became enraptured, and filled with sensations unutterable. In my joy and wonder I asked a heavenly being, who stood near me, what caused the melodious sounds which I heard. The being answered, "A company of angels singing." The tones increased in their thrilling power and sweetness as they drew nearer; but, before the seraphic band came in view, I was transported away in my dream to the lower world, and left among the common things of earth. After I awoke I found that it was a dream: still the celestial melody seemed to sound on my raptured ear; and the deep impression which it made on my mind the changeful power of time has not wholly effaced. Though it was a dream, I was led to believe that there was a heavenly inspiration connected with it, from the effect it had upon my mind. While I was thus inclined to seriousness, if I had been favoured with the society of persons acquainted with the deep things of experimental religion, to whom I could have opened my mind, and obtained instruction, together with an interest in their prayers, I should have entered with a willing mind the kingdom of Christ.

In my juvenile days I was naturally prone to strong sensibilities—scenes of danger or misery affected me deeply. To see men or brutes struggling for mastery in bloody contests wounded my tender feelings. Even to take the life of animals, which is sweet to them, distressed me; and, unnecessarily to torment them seemed wicked and barbarous, a violation of the laws of nature. Peace and harmony opened scenes congenial with the

pulsations of my nature. I therefore adopted a policy, when at school, to secure the friendship of all my associates, studiously avoiding all rudeness of manners; and cautiously refusing to take any part in the petty broils which frequently occurred among the students —the consequences of strife and enmity I greatly dreaded. I loved myself, and my associates too, and I was not willing that the chain of friendship, the cause of our happiness, should be broken.

The thought of death was terrible to me: I was not resigned to it myself, nor was I willing that any of my friends should die, and mingle with the dust. I was certain, however, that my grandmother, who was then a member of the family, could not continue long; the malady with which she was afflicted was forming an alarming crisis. Her care and kindness had so engaged my affections, that, though her sufferings were extreme, I could not be reconciled to the thought that she must die, and be buried in the cold, gloomy grave, where I could see her no more.

One evening, a short time before my grandmother died, as the members of the family were together in the sitting room, in company with a few neighbours, (a row of empty tumblers stood in view on the top of a high bureau,) suddenly one of the tumblers rung loudly, like a small bell. Every eye was immediately turned thither, but nothing could be seen to cause the sound. In about one minute it rung again; and in about another minute it rung the third time, as before; still everything there remained stationary, without any visible cause to produce the effect.

A similar occurrence took place about twenty years

ago at my oldest brother's house. On a pleasant summer's day, while the family, with some of their friends, were seated at the dining table, a number of glass goblets were placed on the table before us. Immediately after a blessing was implored, before any move was made to serve the company, one of the goblets rung as if struck for the purpose. The attention of all was arrested; not a word was spoken; in about one minute it rung as before, and at the expiration of another minute it rung the third time.

About ten years after this mysterious event a similar occurrence happened in my own dwelling, in the presence of three or four gentlemen. A dozen or more tumblers stood arranged on a shelf: suddenly our attention was called to the loud ringing of one of them. While we stood silently gazing, with a degree of wonder, it rung again. Then I broke the vocal silence by asserting, with some emphasis, that it would ring once more; which saying seemed to surprise one of the gentlemen, who had no faith in mysterious events. But to his amazement, immediately after I had uttered the sentence, it rung the third time.

The foregoing incidents I have recorded without attempting to offer any explanation, as I do not profess to understand their latent causes. I therefore leave the reader to make his own comments, and to dispose of the facts according to the rules of truth and reason.

Nature, the benignant foster-mother of us all, attracted my early attention. I contemplated her beauties and perfections with rapturous delight in the days of my boyhood. The properties of matter I laboured to understand before ever I saw a page of natural philo-

sophy. The works of Nature were beautiful to my eye; and her million tongues, uttering millions of tones, made delightful music for my ear: she was my early preceptress. I attended her enchanting lectures by night, in the radiance of the stars; and read her easy pictorial lessons by day, in mirror ponds and purling streams. I was charmed to see the ready work of her fingers, as she notched and plaited the leaves of pinks, roses, and the wild flowers of the common. I also watched with care to see her pencil move, as she painted the grass and flowers with rainbow hues, while they were receiving their forms. I wondered how the happy birds, without instruction, could learn to sing so sweetly. It was also above my comprehension how the ready bees acquired mechanical knowledge to build their warm palaces, and supply them with royal luxuries. As I awoke in the morning, it made me laugh to see the soft beams of Nature's great eye flash through my windows, inviting me to rise and behold the beauties of her smiling face. But when Nature frowned, and showed signs of anger, it dismayed me: her fiery arrows, which darted from the murky clouds, together with her terrific voice, made me tremble. Still I admired Nature, because she taught me this great truth, *there is a God.*

CHAPTER II.

Emigration designed—Attachment to home—Anticipations—Embarked for Albany—Passage on the Sound—Hell-gate—New-York—Divine service—The museum—Former and latter days compared—Scenes on the Hudson—Albany—Schenectady—Passage up the Mohawk—Fort Plain—Detention—Journey by land—Place of destination—Log-house—Reflections—Comforts realized—Life in jeopardy.

At this period I was exulting on the sunny summit of my twelfth year; at which time my feeble domesticated mind began to expand with greater solicitude, and take in a wider range of thought. As time rolled on I found myself approaching a change in life more trying than I had known before. A train of occurrences premonished me that I should soon be under the necessity of leaving my home, and the land of my nativity: for, after mature deliberation, my father deemed it requisite, for the benefit of his family, to emigrate to some part of western New-York. Accordingly, arrangements were made, and he set off on an exploring journey; and, after travelling awhile in the wilderness of the west, he completed his object in the purchase of a tract of land, chiefly in a wild state, lying in the town of Brookfield, Madison county. There my father remained, during the summer, to prepare accommodations for the reception of his family, whom he intended should remove thither as soon as practicable.

The thought that I must leave the place where I had spent my days of childhood, filled my mind with gloom and anxiety. That rural spot was my Eden—the peaceful centre of the world to me. I had formed

no acquaintances abroad, for I never went far from my own vicinity. My cheerful school-fellows were there—to leave their society, with the familiar roads printed with our playful feet, and go into the wilderness to mingle with strangers, where the mountain wolves and shaggy bears claim residence, was appalling to my feelings. And to leave the branchy fruit-trees,—apple, peach, plum, and pear,—my mute, but sweet acquaintances, whose kindly limbs, loaded with delicious fruit, had often regaled my eye and taste; the grape-vines also, which mantled the mossy rocks, and held their purple clusters waiting for the whistling boys to come and gather them:—these, together with the sweet birds which sung over my head, I must leave; and everything else dear to me, except my parents, two brothers, Nicholas and Thomas, and three sisters, Anna, Betsey, and Cynthia.

The economy of the human intellect is admirable: when despoiled of one source of enjoyment it flies on the wings of hope to find another—activity is its native element. By continued effort, I soon found that I could unbind my thoughts from their wonted coil around the localities of my early home, and send them off with high expectations to explore the future, to form schemes of happiness in distant places to me unknown. So, by degrees, I became more and more reconciled to the arrangement, and to the unexpected revolution of events. As my mind became released from the fixtures of home, it gained freedom to play abroad. Hence I had many mental dreams, in which I saw, prospectively, many sources of consolation springing up around me in the log-cabined wilder-

ness. I thought that I should become more acquainted with the world—the Indian and his dog I should see there; and, with pleasure, behold the wild deer skip and bound through the forest. Moreover, in my imagination, I saw a nursery of fruit-trees, growing from the seeds which I then intended to carry with me, which would soon bear fruit. I also should see where the beautiful birds of the wilderness dwell, and attend their morning concerts; and learn how the wild bees of the forest plan their palaces, in hollow trees, and make themselves rich with the sweet dew of heaven. That fluid substance I knew was delicious, and the way the bees gathered it was plain to my understanding; but how the wise Creator, who planted the forest, had deposited sugar in the maple-trees, for the use of the emigrants, I could not understand. This wild treasure seemed to laugh down my old home with all its store of luxuries.

Thus my bounding thoughts, as they ranged along the future, created bright visionary hopes in my youthful bosom: still meddlesome care, anxiety, and fear, often predominated. In this state of light and shadow, hope and dread, my mind was involved, when, on the 1st of April, 1797, I parted from my dear associates, together with the delightful shore where I was cradled, and entered on board a vessel bound to Albany. When the departing hour arrived, the vessel was loosened from the pier, and soon the dancing breezes filled her hempen wings, and wafted her along the harbour toward the arms of the sea. The pleasant city, New-London, standing on its foundation of everlasting rock, soon disappeared, leaving Fort Trumble

and Fort Griswold in view, resting on the dim summits, in the hazy distance, sinking under the wasting influence of revolving time. The new, imposing scenery, which continually opened on the gaze, as the vessel gallopped along over the waves, diverted my thoughts from the delightful haunts I had left behind. Our mode of living, too, was a great novelty to me. To dwell in a floating house; to be tossed while eating; to be rocked in our beds, by the roll of the waves; together with a strange mingled crowd of citizens and sailors, differing in dress and manners, greatly amused my youthful, inexperienced mind. Among the passengers I noticed one, in particular, who appeared to be somewhat wild and eccentric. He called himself "Luck"—his proper name I do not recollect. He assumed this appellation on the account of a disappointment which had befallen him. Poor fellow, he had been wounded by an arrow from Cupid's elastic bow! The balance-wheel of his mind had lost its governing power. His tongue played lively, but his words were incoherent, and his actions indiscreet. Luck, however, played his part among the rest of the passengers, and made some amusement for the tittering young people. Only to see his forlorn state of mind was enough to teach them all to keep under due control the bewitching power of playful fancy.

As we passed along the Sound my fears were considerably excited by the announcement, that the vessel was approaching the perilous place called "Hell-gate"—a place where the channel is dangerous, in consequence of its zigzag course, and being narrowed by beds of ragged rocks. There the restless tides

rolled over the rocks in adverse currents, forming rapid whirlpools, whitened by the foam of the agitated waters. We passed a beautiful brig, lying prone, on the fatal rocks. Our skilful pilot, however, understanding the channel, conducted us safely through.

Soon after this danger was passed our troubled minds became tranquil as before; and then I regaled my animated sight with a distant view of New-York, the emporium of the state, the city renowned for life and splendour. To my excited vision it appeared, in the distance, beautiful and extensive. But the streets, I found, were irregular, like winding sheep-paths along the Connecticut hills and dales—lanes narrow, dismal, and serpentine. The city evidently grew up, like many others, according to the dictation of interest and local circumstances, without any regular preconceived plan for its future growth and splendour. The locality of the city, however, together with the natural surrounding advantages, afforded a charming scene for the contemplative mind, enamoured with the beauties of nature. Good taste and elegance were displayed in some of the public buildings, though erected in dark and troublesome times. In those days it appeared that the citizens were governed more by economy and convenience, than by needless show, in the erection of their public structures. The magnificent, ornamental edifices, they were under a necessity to leave for the opening of the more auspicious period of the nineteenth century. The space the whole city then covered was comparatively small, and the entire population did not exceed forty thousand.

On sabbath I attended church there, and heard a

huge organ breathe and groan through its hoarse pipes. Though the tones were soft at first, they soon swelled louder, in imitation of small thunder, and overwhelmed the sweet voices of the worshippers, who were labouring to mingle words and thoughts with sound. As the service progressed the priest attracted my attention. He was richly dressed, and his barber had showered hair powder on him so profusely that his head and shoulders appeared white as a miller's hat. He was doubtless an intelligent man, but I did not understand much of what he read—all was reading—the house was large, and I was seated far from the rostrum. My attention, moreover, was otherwise engaged. I confess I was so irreverent there, that while service was being performed, I was viewing the style of ornamental work in the interior of the building, and counting the panes of glass in one of the large Gothic windows: so you see that I was a wicked boy.

To gratify my curiosity, and to open a new field of speculation to my inquiring mind, my father went with me to the museum; and there I had a feast of delight: the limited compass of my mind was filled with wonder. Music, soft and sweet, filled my ear, while thousands of things appeared around me. A variety of birds, serpents, minerals, skeletons, waxwork, and paintings, stood inviting my enraptured gaze. I could have spent a week there pleasantly, studying the wonders of nature and art. I came away reluctantly, with many new thoughts, and some strange feelings.

The grand improvements which crown the present enterprising age were then unknown, slumbering in unborn time. The construction of canals was a won-

der confined to the old world—no one had ventured so far into visionary speculations as to think that canals could be constructed here, and the plan of a railroad had never entered the head of the wildest dreamer. The active power of steam, as a mechanical agent, was not developed. Mariners waited patiently for winds and tides. Travellers went over land slowly on foot, in wagons, or on horses, calmly talking over past events, and prophesying about their future fortunes. The world then was not in such a tremendous fever and tumult as it is now. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, came and went in turn as swiftly as necessary, and man seemed to be contented with the established order of things; but, since the world has taken fire, all must run, and everything must fly. Complaints are often heard about detention—"The steamboat was sluggish, and fell behind her time"—"The cars frustrated some calculations by stopping a few minutes too long on the way." So the hurry of worldly men increases in proportion to the speed with which they fly. And there is danger ahead, for the wild calculations of the world are outflying all speed.

After a few days' detention in the city, the wind and tide being in our favour, the hawsers were taken on board, and the vessel moved slowly from the shore into the channel of the beautiful Hudson. As the kindly breezes wafted us along, the Jersey shore, and the noisy city we had left, soon began to sink away in the lessening distance, while over our bow appeared those enduring monuments of creative power that adorn the romantic shores of this noted river. The sublimity of nature's formations that met our anxious

gaze, ornamented with beautiful appendages in endless variety, touched the springs of thought, called forth many questions, and became the theme of much pleasant conversation. And here busy thought called up the adventurous Hudson, who first navigated this river, and, to immortalize his memory, bequeathed to it his own name. After struggling awhile, West Point came in view, which brought into remembrance Arnold's treacherous transaction there. Our movements along the river were necessarily slow and various, being subjected to the power of the fickle elements; but we were not alone, (misery often has company whether it is desired or not,) the river was spotted with vessels, before us and in the rear, trying to make headway to some point; the sails sometimes flapping, then bending and hugging the skittish winds, and all in a lively dance, careening and veering on the changeable surface of the river. The sight was truly amusing. And, as we moved onward, I saw, for the first time, the blue summits of the Catskill Mountains. There villages, retired mansions, and huts, the abodes of affluence and poverty, came into view along the banks of the river; and, on the shore, the fishermen were engaged in their useful, though uncomfortable occupation, while the sea-fowl were busily employed in swimming the waves, and flapping their glossy wings, and screaming and chattering in dialects which I did not understand. Everything along the passage being new and amusing, I had no time to cogitate on the future, or to reflect on the delightful realities which I had left behind.

Although there are many things, connected with a journey by water, which are amusing to a juvenile

mind, still to one unaccustomed to such a life of confinement and motion, the novelty soon dies away, and the mode of living becomes irksome. Being retarded by adverse winds and tides, our passage was necessarily prolonged; hence I became weary and anxious to see the end. But my mind was relieved as soon as Albany, the port of our destination, appeared on the smoky shore a few miles ahead. This city, if it were worthy of the name, was then but a small town, unpleasant in its location, gloomy in appearance, with scarcely any beauties of nature or art to embellish it.

Here we disembarked, and, after procuring means to convey us onward, we left the city and ascended the hill on our road toward Schenectady. Our condition was now changed. We moved slowly on wheels over the sandy plains in lumber-wagons, reflecting on past occurrences, and feeling much solicitude concerning the future. So time passed on till our sluggish wheels, after dooming us to weariness, brought us safely into Schenectady, a miserable muddy village on the Mohawk River, where we were compelled, by the law of circumstances, to remain a short time.

In those days the Mohawk River afforded the only channel of communication with the western region. Large boats, constructed for the purpose, were employed on this stream, by which a tardy navigation was carried on from Schenectady to Rome, thence by a ditch, which intersected with Wood Creek, the boats passed on far into the bosom of the western wilderness.

Without delay a contract was made with the manager of one of these boats to convey us up the river as far as Fort Plain. Accordingly, after some preparations

were made, and everything on board, with cheerful hearts we set off. In this mode of inland navigation our progress against the current was necessarily slow. As skill directed, the boat was kept along the shore, the men pushing her forward with poles prepared for the purpose. A small sail was aboard, an appendage to the boat, and when the wind was favourable it was set, as an auxiliary, to facilitate our progress. To the eye of an observer our boat must have made a strange appearance, the sail coming often in contact with the limbs of the trees that hung over the margin of the river.

In some places the bed of the river had a great inclination; hence we met with many rapids, some of which were very dangerous, in consequence of large rocks lying promiscuously across the river, over which the current ran furiously, foaming and thundering as it rolled along. As we were passing up on the side of one of these rapids, the current was so strong, even along the shore, that the boatmen were under the necessity of exerting all their strength to overcome the resistance of the stream. Our sail was set at the time, and flapping in the whiffling wind, affording no assistance in advancing the boat, but making our situation evidently perilous. My father requested the boatmen to take down the sail, but all to no purpose; they were either blinded by the effects of strong drink, or something else, so that they saw no danger. So they continued their efforts, pushing with their poles, cursing and muttering over something in Low Dutch, till suddenly an adverse current of wind struck the sail, and turned the boat off from the shore, directly into the wild rapids. It was a dubious moment in the view of

all: that the wind should drive so large a boat, carrying only one small sail, directly across the river, over rocks and against such a headlong current, seemed truly marvellous. The hand of Providence was doubtless present, and held an unseen control amid the dangers of that gloomy hour. The man at the helm sat attending to his charge, thoughtful and silent; an overwhelming dread rested on every one, while the boat seemed to fly along on the surface of the foaming water till she reached the other shore. If she had struck a rock while in the rapids, she would have been overturned, and probably all on board would have perished, not leaving one to tell the story.

Soon after this occurrence, the heedless boatmen remarked, with much indifference, that if the boat had been dashed on the rocks, they could have saved themselves by swimming, which appeared to be the extent of their concern. Their conduct was a specimen of the tender mercies of the wicked. They did not even acknowledge their unwise management, nor give us any assurance that they would show any more solicitude for our safety in future. Hence, to avoid the danger to which we were frequently exposed, we all left the boat and travelled up the river five miles, on foot, before breakfast.

So, after suffering much from fear, anxiety, and toil, we arrived at Fort Plain, the landing place. Here our minds were relieved—the difficulties and dangers of the river navigation were only seen by the eye of reflection, while we were glad to find ourselves once more securely placed on the solid earth, though forty miles distant from the place of our destination, and

the roads thither winding through a rough wilderness country, which often perplexed the traveller, and brought his patience and physical endurance to the test.

An unexpected detention here among strangers, and on expense, contributed greatly to enhance the burden of our anxiety. When we arrived, the labouring men were employed on the farms, and no ordinary compensation would induce them to convey us on till they had completed their urgent business. While here detained, my father was taken ill, and remained some time sorely afflicted with inflammatory rheumatism. The rest of the family continued to enjoy health, and some of us, whose hearts were bounding with youthful vivacity, were pleasantly employed, practising in the art of forming new acquaintances.

The inhabitants here were chiefly Dutch; the central place for business stood on a little eminence, called "Sand Hill." A Lutheran Church, one or two stores, and a tavern, constituted the chief ornaments of that rural spot. At a short distance, on a high bank, in view, stood the old Block-house, sinking gradually into decay by the effect of time—some boxes of ammunition still remained there. This temporary fortification gave notoriety to the place, and was of some importance in the revolutionary contest, as a defence against the sudden onsets of the hostile Indians.

The tones of the German vulgar dialect, which was generally heard here, afforded me some amusement. Though the sounds were rough and guttural, they were a substitute for music to my youthful ear—variety and novelty always had charms for me. Although they used their vernacular dialect in conversa-

tion among themselves, they all could speak imperfect English; so, in our social circles they played their part with us. They told us many humourous stories about the shrewd Yankees—how they had abused the honest, unsuspecting Dutchmen—they had duped them every way. One Yankee purchased a fine horse, and paid the price in old continental money, which for many years had been as dead as Jonah's gourd. Hence we were treated with coolness at first, and watched with a suspicious eye. They were apprehensive that we would contrive some plan to impose upon them. However, after being there a few weeks, mingling in their society, without giving them any reason to charge us with duplicity, they dismissed all their fears and reservedness, and became as social and friendly with us as if we had been old acquaintances.

In manners the people here were artless and plain; in their business transactions honest and faithful; but in religion they were formal and superficial; dancing, profanity and drunkenness were vices habitual among many of the members of the church; their minister, however, kindly admonished them not to do as he did, but to do as he said. Still they were kind to us. When the time of our departure arrived, it was with emotions of reluctance that we parted with them. So we learned that a friendly acquaintance with strangers could be easily formed in a short time.

When the day arrived, pursuant to arrangement we set off on our journey, all packed into large rough wagons, with no elastic springs under us, the yielding mud, notwithstanding, letting us go down, but refusing to react to raise us up. So, with tardy motion, we

moved onward, up hill and down, through clay and mud, over rocks and stumps, through swamps and brooks, on causeways and log bridges, rolling and tumbling, till we were dizzy with incessant motion, and weary with our unpleasant mode of balancing. This was a new chapter in the history of my experience. Every mile of the distance brought to my view something interesting and instructive. There I saw nature at home, clad in her wild drapery, where meddlesome art had not marred her beauties, nor intruded into her solitudes. Then an opening appeared on our road, where the axe had prostrated the forest—where some industrious, enterprising emigrant had located his family in a log cabin. This kind of variety in scenery along the toilsome way afforded a pleasing relief to our attentive view and thinking minds, till our journey came to a termination at the place appointed for our permanent residence.

While descending a hill we came to the margin of an opening which was surrounded by a dense forest; and on a little eminence, in the opening, stood a log cottage, with a few acres of cultivated land lying on a plain before it. Strange emotions of joy and anxiety were excited in some of our minds, when we learned that this was the place which we had laboured so long to gain—this was our home. But how unlike the one we had left behind! Still it possessed some real charms—it was our home.

The house we not only found constructed of logs, rough as they grew in the forest, but the elm-tree had been despoiled of its bark to constitute a covering for the roof. The floor was made of riven logs, and oiled

paper formed a temporary medium to admit light into the room. There was a place for fire, and an opening in the roof, to give vent to the smoke—chimneys were not in fashion there at that early period.

We however soon learned that man's real wants are comparatively few, comprising everything that his nature necessarily and strictly demands, and nothing more. To live, and to live comfortably, does not require marble palaces, nor lofty dwellings, splendid furniture, nor useless decorations, gaudy robes, nor sumptuous fare. These pompous trifles afford no real comforts to the mortal, sensitive part of man, nor to his enduring mind; he can be as happy without them as he can be in the possession of them. He who enjoys a competency of earthly blessings, and nothing more, has less perplexing cares, and a greater degree of happiness, than the envied lordling who possesses affluence and a needless abundance. Discord and misery as often inhabit the proud mansions of luxury as the humble, sequestered cottage.

Though the saying may seem strange to some, it is nevertheless true, that we enjoyed as much of the real elements of happiness there, imbowered in the bosom of the wilderness, with a few neighbours settled around us, as we ever did in our native land. It is true that we experienced some inconveniences, common to a location in a newly-settled country, but these were easily endured, when we found that all the essential comforts and blessings, abounding in older countries, were present with us there. The same Providence presided over us with a watchful eye. The sun which warmed and illuminated the beau-

tiful shores of the Atlantic, rose as often to our view, and cheered us in the wilderness with equal brightness. The moon and stars, in turn, shed light on our evening walks, and benefited us as much as if we had been princes residing in marble palaces. The same seasons came and went—our years numbered as many months, our weeks as many days, as the proudest monarch on earth could claim. The holy sabbath came to our door with equal brightness, and came as often as it did in the land we had left. The same Bible, filled with sacred promises, we had there before us; and the same throne of mercy was at hand, imbowered in the umbrageous forests, where the ear of Heaven was so near us that our inmost thoughts were heard. Streams of pure water gushed from the hills and flowed along by our door. The breezes which fanned us while oppressed with a summer's sun were softer and sweeter than the Turkish emperor ever enjoyed from the hands of his menial slaves. A variety of beautiful birds, all natives of the wilderness, were around us with as sweet melodious notes as ever were heard in the cultivated groves of Europe. Some, while wending upward on wing, as if to display their musical powers, sung their lively warbles in artless demisemiquavers, while others sat on waving branches, singing thus to their companions, "I love you, I love you;" and others answering, "Show it, show it." The young deer of the forest, by our kindness and attention, lost its wildness, became pleased with domestic life, played with us around our dwelling, and ate from our hands at the table. Nature bestowed as much labour here, in painting the wild

flowers of the desert, as she did in adorning for pleasure the flower gardens of the east. The well-fed kine came lowing from the wilderness to regale us with milk, and liquid sugar, stored for our use by the wise Creator, came flowing down the maple trees. The pure wheat waved in the genial soil, while the tall corn and huge pumpkins ripened and yellowed in the fostering sun. Wild plums and grapes were provided for our use, while salutary herbs, balsam trees and balm of Gilead, grew near us for medicine.

So we were supplied with some harmless amusements and a multitude of the real comforts of life; for all which we were indebted to our wise Creator, the Father of all our mercies. And as the population of the country increased, the roads were improved, schools established, and mills erected. So the power of sinew and muscle, when brought into action by the law of reason, gives new features to the wild face of nature. To change the wilderness into a fruitful field, not only fulfils the Creator's appointment, but is a necessary work for the benefit of mankind. To labour then is no disgrace. It is commendable and beneficial every way. It strengthens the physical powers of man, makes his food relish, his sleep quiet and refreshing. It requires, however, much courage and patience to remove the tall forest trees, and bring the dormant earth under the dominion of the plough. The labourer's life, too, is often endangered in the operation.

One day my elder brother and myself were felling a tree on the edge of the forest: behind us stood another tree cut deeply on each side, and, for some reasons unknown, it was left standing in this situation.

Suddenly a loud crack was heard. My instant impression was, that the sound proceeded from the tree on which we were labouring; therefore I sprang from it a short distance, to avoid danger, which distance brought me directly in the range of the other tree as it was falling. A limb, near the junction of the body, struck me on the arch of the forehead, following me down till it was arrested by a large log, which prevented the tree from crushing me into the earth. When I was raised on my feet, blood was streaming from the wound; and, on examination, there appeared an indentation of the skull, about an inch in length, forming a diagonal line, which will doubtless remain there till I return to dust. When the tree struck me I thought I was plunging into the awful world of spirits. The impression was terrific to my gloomy, unreconciled mind. However, the God of mercy spared my life.

At another time, while I stood chopping on a log, beneath some lofty trees, as I raised my body in bringing up my axe, instantly a ponderous limb, about four feet long, without branches, came down from its lodge in the top of a tree, just passed my face, and fell thundering at my feet. If the limb had fallen only three seconds sooner, while I was bent over, it would have come in contact with the back part of my head, and then I should have been sent, in a moment, to the eternal world.

These striking instances of escape from imminent danger, together with many others which I had experienced, confirmed me in the doctrine of a particular providence, and showed me that I was continually dependant on the arm of God for the preservation of my life.

CHAPTER III.

Religious impressions—Dreadful storm—Singular man—Incidents in Connecticut—The missionary—Year 1800—Reformation—Two preachers—Observations—Eldest sister—Affecting scene—Resolution—A pious lady—The witness—Family converted—Strange operations.

At this early period there was no place of public worship near us; still that deficiency afforded us no reasonable excuse for not offering adoration to the supreme Divinity, he being not confined to temples made by mortal hands, but present everywhere, beholding everything. Morality, in the common acceptation of the term, was regarded by the whole family, though not one of its members professed to know anything about experimental religion. My father continued to adhere closely to his dark theory of deistical Universalism. However consoling and philosophical it seemed to him, it evidently had no more influence on the rest of the family than the story of the pretended miracles of Mohammed.

The subject of evangelical religion was not popular there: poor careless sinners could not converse understandingly on the subject, because they knew nothing about it. Though this mysterious subject was seldom mentioned by any one in the neighbourhood, still it often occupied my thoughts. I was strongly impressed that the soul required a fitness for heaven which it did not possess by nature. Hence I often had fears, and a serious solicitude about my future happiness. The dying hour, the dark cold grave, and the judgment

day, were subjects which often entered into my deliberations. If I laboured to divest my thoughts of such gloomy subjects, still, when any alarming event occurred, they rolled back again upon my troubled mind.

One evening, in the summer of 1799, the gathering clouds indicated an approaching tempest. The fluid elements were in commotion along the western hills—lightnings flashed and distant thunder was heard. The cloud soon came over, fraught with wind and rain, and highly charged with electricity, which raged incessantly and fearfully, producing such strong concussions in the atmosphere, that the solid earth quaked under it, at the same time affecting all in our trembling habitation with frequent shuddering. In a short time the clouds passed over and sunk down in the east, appearing like waves of liquid flame. Some of the family had retired to rest; but we were soon notified, by the continual glare of lightning along the summits of the hills, that another cloud was rising, which, as it came wheeled on by the angry winds, seemed more terrific than the other. With sleepless eyes I lay trembling, fearing that every breath would be my last. And O! the thought of dying in an unprepared state filled my mind with anguish! I sighed upon my couch, and prayed for protection and mercy at the throne of God, who held control over the raging elements. As that cloud passed off into the east with unabated terrors, another mass of muddy vapours, mingled with fire, appeared in the west. The vault above was illuminated; the world seemed to roll in an ocean of flame, and trembled, as if in agony, under incessant peals of deafening thunder.

So one cloud arose after another in quick succession throughout that dismal night. The scene was too majestic and tremendous for words to represent: the imperfect touches of laborious description sink far below the sublime reality. The terrors of an angry God and the awful judgment day were continually in my mind. My thoughts and feelings, however, were cloistered in my throbbing heart. No one but the all-seeing God knew the anxiety of my troubled soul. To him I prayed, in agony of spirit, during the dangers of that tempestuous night. My father walked the floor and watched the movements of the elements: though not easily excited, he evidently felt at that time unusual apprehensions of danger. A dead silence reigned among us, except an occasional question respecting the appearance of the clouds, and a brief reply.

So the burdened hours rolled on, till at length the welcome morning came: the storm had passed away with the night; the warring elements had spent their fury and gone to rest; and we found ourselves still alive and in the same world in which we were born. The hand of Providence had covered us while in our perilous condition. To behold the light of the rising sun, to gaze once more on the calm face of nature, filled my heart with gratitude and joy: still there was gloom abroad on the face of the earth. The world, like a ship emerging from a storm, showed signs of the rough night it had passed through: fields lay oppressed and beaten by rain; trees shattered by lightning, and cattle killed. Three were found dead under one tree, but a little distance from us. The lightning passed down the body of the tree, only scarifying the bark,

then struck the animals. The horns of one were driven into the ground, and, on one side, a seared spot appeared on the skin, and directly under it a perforation was discovered as large as an ounce ball, extending through the trunk of the animal. And, moreover, intelligence came in afterward, showing that the storm of that memorable night was very extensive, and that destruction and wo had accompanied it along its course to the shore of the Atlantic.

At this time our section of country was putting on a new aspect: the wilderness around us began to bud and blossom with life and intelligence, and our thin neighbourhood was increasing gradually in population. Among others, a man, singular in some things, came in with his family and settled near us. He was, withal, in a state of extreme destitution. This circumstance, however, did not sink him into disrepute among his neighbours: rich and poor formed but one class in society in that new country. The curse of heathenish castes, which exists in a refined state everywhere in older countries, was unknown there. Virtue and intelligence constituted the chief distinctions in that community, which were evidently founded on the principles of truth and reason.

This poor man brought something with him, which, in the estimation of the ignorant and vulgar, made him odious, and subjected his name and person to ridicule. His poverty was not the offensive thing in their view; it was merely a name, which, for some reason, became attached to him—he was called a *Methodist*. No one professed to know what the appellation signified, excepting it was characteristic

of some strange kind of religion. What that religion consisted in, what doctrines it embraced, no one could tell; nor was there any inquiry made to learn the secret. It was presumed that it merited public detestation. Hence this poor man was doomed to suffer reproach by some among us, who were willing to expose their ignorance in making themselves merry with a matter which they did not understand.

This incident brought to my recollection some occurrences which took place in Connecticut. Awhile before I left that country, some noisy reports were rife respecting certain religionists, who, to disseminate their doctrines, had intruded themselves into the state, and were riding over parish lines, breaking up the repose of organized societies, and, by their noisy declamations, had deluded some away from their hopes, and made them quite fanatical. No one seemed to know any good of them. In the opinion of many they were "*irregular* and *unauthorized*." Some of their jealous opposers piously thought and said, "that they were wolves in sheep's clothing, employed by the prince of darkness to sow erroneous doctrines through the land, to disturb churches, deceive the people, and turn the world upside down." Hence these lovers of good order warned the people not to go after them. My mother, however, was so adventurous as to walk to the margin of the town, over the rough Connecticut roads, to hear one of these reputed "deceivers" preach. On her return it was evident that she had not lost her reason, nor become deluded by satisfying her curiosity. She was much delighted with the sermon—said that the preacher kneeled when he prayed,

as the apostles and ancient saints did, which appeared strange—the old custom was not fashionable there! Being but a lad then, I learned nothing about this new sect, except their appropriate name, which distinguished them from all others—they were called *Methodists*.

The poor man, mentioned before, had become acquainted with some of these servants of God, had embraced their peculiar doctrines, connected himself with them, and consequently received the distinguishing name of their sect, on account of which he suffered reproach.

About this time a minister of the gospel, of some notoriety, belonging to this new sect, came into the neighbourhood. He had been on a mission to some Indian tribe at the West; and, while on his way back, he learned that a man belonging to the Methodist Church resided in our neighbourhood. Being anxious to find a pious friend with whom he could rest awhile, he came on in search of him, and was directed to the home of that poor man, whom he found the pious lord and occupant of a miserable hovel. Having no accommodations to make a friend comfortable through the night, he conducted his guest to my father's house, and introduced him there as a minister of the gospel. My father, though still confiding in the cold theory of infidelity, had a kind, benevolent heart, and was always delighted with good, intelligent company; hence he received the stranger cordially; indeed, all ministers of the gospel were welcome at his house.

The intelligence and social disposition of this pious stranger produced a favourable impression on my father's mind, who always esteemed it as great a

privilege to learn the opinions of others as to communicate his own. So the time passed pleasantly on, while a curious desire was afloat in the neighbourhood to hear the stranger preach, who, it appeared, was providentially sent there. The consent of the minister being obtained, an appointment for preaching was accordingly published through the neighbourhood. At the time appointed, the people, old and young, came together, excited by curiosity, to hear the mystery of Methodism explained.

The sainted preacher appeared to understand the philosophy of human depravity. The scheme of general redemption, personal salvation from all sin, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the express conditions of faith and repentance, were subjects familiar to him. He appeared to labour to win souls to Christ. He spoke plainly and forcibly. Close attention was given while he expounded the text, and delivered his solemn message to the congregation. Their curiosity was fully satisfied. "*The way, the truth, and the life,*" were placed before them, and they had something serious to occupy their thoughts. No one felt any disposition to treat the stranger disrespectfully, or to despise his doctrines, though some of them had abused the poor praying man who was the cause, employed by divine Providence, in bringing him there.

After a few more months had rolled away, the year 1800 came on to give existence to a new series of events; the approach of which was attended with dread to my credulous mind in consequence of reading, a few years before, the prophecy of Christopher Love. He announced that the year 1800 would come fraught

with tremendous events: that revolutions would shake the foundations of states and empires; and wars and commotions would spread desolation round the world. The prophecy, however, proved to be like some other productions, the mere delusion of a self-inspired imagination.

The year came, and though some calamities came also, it was fraught with auspicious events to the inhabitants of our new country. A great and glorious reformation crowned that year, which still lives in the recollection of many, and will doubtless be remembered with rapture in eternity. It spread like a flame driven by the winds of heaven. It was truly a divine reformation. No argument or device of men or devils could stand before it. On his chariot of salvation the immortal Jehovah rode, conquering the pride of man by the sword of his Spirit. The rapturous strain of angels, "Glory to God in the highest! on earth peace; good will toward men!" was sung by many there with joyful hearts, while the wilderness echoed the sound, and waved its leafy branches over the heads of those whom the Lord had redeemed and crowned with unearthly glory.

The principal instruments which the Almighty used in commencing and carrying on this wonderful work were two Methodist preachers, who, while they were exploring the hills and valleys seeking for lost sinners, came into our neighbourhood, where they were kindly received as the messengers of God. The fact that they were illiterate men, possessing only a common share of native talent, made the work appear more strange and marvellous. To effect such mighty changes in the lives and sentiments of careless mortals,

and to hold control over the passions and intellects of all classes in society, would require, according to human calculation, the talents of the wisest and greatest of men. It was therefore manifest to every discerning mind that the cause which effected these wonders lay not in the feeble instruments, but in the power of God, who was pleased to use them, to magnify his own glory and grace; at the same time, to prostrate the wisdom of the world, and lay the pride and glory of man in the dust.

These men were devoted servants of God, endowed with wisdom and power from above; and blessed with the unction of the Holy Spirit. They appeared to walk with God, realizing continually their own insufficiency; and their entire dependance on the arm of Heaven. Hence they often resorted to the throne of grace, and there held communion with God, knowing that they could not preach effectually without his special aid. Great was their faith; and, in prayer, they were mighty—there lay the secret of their strength. By a strong devotional grasp they held on to the throne of heaven; and were enabled, by the strength they derived, to move the world. They understood the doctrine of the fall of man—the consequent depravity of every generation; and the perfected plan of redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ. So they had correct views of the law and gospel—the nature of sin, and its only remedy. Experimental religion was a lucid theme to them. They spoke from the deep emotions of their own hearts—told us what they knew and how they felt. They understood the means, by which they were saved from sin themselves,

and urged the same course of duties on us. And as Felix trembled when St. Paul related his experience, so did we. Repentance, faith, and salvation through Jesus Christ, constituted the burden of their message, which they delivered in a moving manner. The Spirit of God attended their ministry, and signs and wonders followed them.

It is admitted, that profound learning has ever been, and ever will be, an important acquisition for the minister of the gospel; to enable him to expound the Christian religion, and to meet the subtle arguments of the cavilling world. Still, God will have ministers, and, if holy learned men are not at hand, he *can* take, and *will* take, men of unpolished, unlettered minds, that glow with a pious flame, and send them out, under divine influences, to proclaim the great salvation. Verily, He who made a dry rod, in the hand of Moses, effect wonders before Pharaoh and the learned enemies of truth; and gave virtue and power to dull clay, to open the eyes of one who was born blind, to confound the subtle Jews,—can easily teach a regenerated man to preach the gospel, out of the fulness of his heart, so as to confound the wise in their craftiness, and bring sinners to repentance. But when any one is thus called of God to preach—that some are thus called there is no doubt—it is unquestionably his duty, to study diligently to be a workman, and an accomplished scholar; else he will bury his intellectual talents in obscurity, which his Creator has given him to improve. It is a fact that God never bestows special gifts of grace to defeat the improvement of the talents conferred by the law of nature.

It is wonderful to see how the wisdom of the world is often confounded by the deep and marvellous works of God. The Almighty will be honoured: he will not suffer the proud devices of men to obscure his own wisdom. In the opening of the kingdom of grace, on earth, the Saviour disowned the policy and schemes of human wisdom, in the selection he made of unpolished, illiterate men, to be the apostles and ministers of the new covenant. The measure was viewed with astonishment; and reprobated, by all worldly theorists, as wild and injudicious, calculated to sink his cause into disrepute; and, consequently, defeat its noble end. But, in all this, the wisdom of God was displayed. These poor obscure men, inspired by their Master, and endowed with supernatural power, by which they spoke with tongues, and performed miracles, completely confounded the enemies of Christ by their wonderful works, and proved effectually the validity of their mission. Men are often wise in their own conceits, and blunder into erroneous schemes; but the wisdom of God shines out brightly in all his works and counsels.

It is a lamentable fact, which cannot be concealed, that there are many ministers in the different churches, famed for their talents and learning, who have attracted much attention, and often obtained the applause of men, but never have made a Felix tremble, or caused an infidel to blush, or converted one sinner from the error of his ways. No signs follow them but worldly honours, pride, affluence, and moral death. They evidently preach for themselves, and not for Christ. Though possessed of noble acquisitions, as auxiliaries

for usefulness, they doubtless lack the most important things—a devout heart, and power from on high. The unction of the Holy Spirit is not resting upon them: if it were, the blessed fruits of the Spirit would be springing up under their ministry—the true servants of God do not labour in vain. But if these ministers, in addition to their learning and talents, were as holy, and as mighty in faith and prayer, as the two illiterate servants of God, mentioned before, whose labours were blessed so wonderfully—they could make proud sinners tremble, and move the slumbering world to repentance. A great weight of responsibility must rest on all who have the charge of souls, and have talents and advantages sufficient to exert a mighty influence over them for good, and do it not.

How will such unfaithful stewards appear, when they shall be called to stand before their holy Judge to answer for their selfishness and negligence! A cloud hangs over their heartless ministrations now, as dark as that which lowered over Cain's imperfect offering, portending a certain rejection from the favour of Heaven. If they, however, should finally escape the gates of hell, their crowns in heaven will be comparatively dim, and without a radiant star to adorn them.

Being released from this digression, we shall now resume the clew of our narrative, following attentively the light of reflection along the labyrinth of past events, where lights and shadows, joys and sorrows, are intermingled. A short distance back the year 1800 opened in our history, and brought a glorious reformation with it. My sister Anna, who was older than myself, was among the first-fruits of that spiritual

harvest. She possessed a great share of vivacity, and was excessively fond of gayety and amusements. Her readiness in conversation, frank and easy manners, won her many friends, and gave her a high rank among her associates. Hence a strange pulse of feeling was excited, among the youth of the town, when it was known that she was under religious impressions. But while they were so concerned on account of her seriousness, she was praying to God for mercy and salvation. Shortly after her prayers were answered; and her anxious soul was released from the power of sin and unbelief. Joy and peace gained entire control over her consecrated spirit.

But before she had received the evidence of her justification, the apparent opposition to her religious course, manifested by her father, in his doubting looks and expressions, respecting a change of heart, and Jesus Christ forgiving sins, occasioned a great conflict in her mind. One night, with deep anxiety of soul, she prayed before retiring to rest, that something comforting might be revealed to her in the visions of the night. While there wrapped in soft repose—according to her own version—"I seemed to be transported into an open space; there, on my left hand, a glorious being appeared with a smile on his countenance; and it was impressed on my understanding that the being whom I beheld was the Saviour. On my right hand stood my father. I was very anxious to go to Jesus Christ the Saviour—though I stood musing in profound silence, it seemed, that my father knew the secret desires of my heart, and felt a strong opposition to my ardent inclination. Hence he

stretched out his hand toward me filled with bright dollars, and said, 'Here, child, don't go to heaven through Christ.' I turned and looked on my left hand, then gazed on the money; then turned back again and looked on the Saviour, who, at length, spoke and said to me, 'I am the way.' When I awoke in the morning I found it was a dream.

"It was, however, impressed on my mind that I must communicate this singular dream to my father; which undertaking seemed difficult for me to perform, in the position I then occupied. Knowing my father's prejudices, I was fearful that he would not receive it kindly if I should relate the vision to him. I was resolved, however, to do what appeared to be my duty, leaving the consequences in the hand of Providence. Accordingly, as soon as a convenient opportunity afforded, in the morning, I communicated the dream to my father, who heard me attentively, and, for some reason, appeared much affected. But I did not then inform him who the man was that offered me the money, nor did he question me on the subject at that time. After relating my dream, I immediately retired into my room, and knelt down before the Lord to pray: I was there, in silent devotion, when my father opened the door and came in. Signs of mental distress were evidently depicted on his countenance, as he walked slowly along and sat down. Though my feelings before were intense, stronger emotions were excited in my trembling heart, when my father said to me, with a solemn, anxious look, 'Do you know the person who presented the money to you, in your dream?' 'Yes, father, I do,' was my reply; 'the per-

son was yourself.' Immediately he fell into extreme agony of mind, and without control he wept aloud. The sound of his lamentations brought my mother into the room, where I tried to pray for them, and mingled my flowing tears with theirs, at the altar of devotion."

Truly my father, by the incident of my sister's dream, was deeply affected at the time;—it being so remarkably personal, he could not resist its influence;—still, it did not appear that he felt much mental anguish on account of his own sinfulness. The wonderful effects produced by the reformation there had evidently disturbed his mind, and led him to examine his system of faith critically, which was assailed, at that time, by a new kind of arguments; and stood trembling on its false and rotten foundation. Weighing these conflicting subjects kept his mind continually vacillating: at one time opposing, at another, yielding, according to the changeful tide of his feelings. In this perplexed state of mind my father appeared at the time my sister stated her dream to him.

So time rolled onward, and week succeeded week, laden with the effects of good and evil, till the following eventful hour came. My sister Anna, whose dream I have related, had been growing stronger in faith and confidence, as she pursued her pious course. On a memorable morning she came from her room under the influence of divine love, threw her arms around her mother's neck, and, with tears and melting tones of affection, exhorted her to pray, and to give her soul into the compassionate arms of Christ. Then, urged by the same holy impulse, she flew to her father, sprinkling the floor with tears as she went, and fell

on his neck, exhorting him to seek salvation—to fly to Jesus Christ for mercy, who was willing to forgive his sins, and restore him to divine favour. The rest of us were silent, sad spectators of the moving scene.

Although my father had been, in years elapsed, a strong advocate for Universalism, in this awful moment his delusive theory fled instantly away, like chaff before the wind. His soul was moved with horror. He melted like wax amidst a flame. While tears flowed down his face, in extreme agitation of mind and with a faltering, tremulous voice, he cried aloud, "O! I fear that there is no mercy for me! I have rebelled against God so long that I am now left hopeless under his frown. But, children," continued he, "there is mercy for you; you have not sinned as long as I have; or grieved the Spirit of God, by opposing the truth, and defending errors, as I have done. You all can obtain forgiveness and be happy for ever."

As my father ceased speaking, while his sorrows were audible, my sister knelt before the throne of mercy and prayed that the God of salvation would have compassion on us all, who were, at the time, melted into tenderness around her. Solemn and deep impressions were made, by the Spirit of God, on each trembling breast, which created an ardent desire, in our hearts, to be saved from sin; a sense of which was then pressing heavily upon our troubled spirits.

Imboldened by the grace of God, which abounded in her heart, this converted sister improved every opportunity to communicate to her youthful associates

the wonderful things she had experienced: and exhorted them to repent, and pray, and seek salvation. Such affectionate admonitions, coming often suddenly upon them, when they were unprepared for resistance, and coming from one also whom they highly esteemed, produced amazing effects. A deep seriousness was becoming apparent among them, and, indeed, the same happy influence was spreading through all classes of community.

The moral sensibility which had followed me along my devious course, from my earliest remembrance, was now matured into a settled conviction of the sinfulness of sin, and its ruinous consequences. Influenced, by these alarming feelings, I came to the conclusion that I would follow the light of revelation, observe every injunction directed from Heaven to a sinner, and endeavour to obtain salvation from sin, which lay heavily on my agonizing soul. Accordingly, I made the wilderness my place of retirement: there, beneath the arms of the forest trees, I first bowed my soul and body, in the attitude of devotion, to confess my sins to God, and to pray for mercy. Often, in the course of a day, with deep sorrow of heart I left my work, and retired thither to pour out the emotions of my soul in prayer. My spirit was not only restless by day, but the gloomy solitudes of night were often broken by the sighs of my troubled breast. Even sleep, which entombs, in forgetfulness, the cares and sorrows of life, allowed wakeful memory to keep the anguish of my heart alive, in wild nocturnal visions.

There were a few, in the neighbourhood, who, after making a public profession of religion, came there, and,

like the Laodiceans, wandered and lost the form and spirit of devotion; but, in this reformation, they became renewed in heart, and united their spiritual strength with the young converts to build up the cause of truth and righteousness. The spiritual harvest field was great; still there were but few labourers. Among these faithful ones whom Heaven was pleased to own as instruments in his hand, was a gifted lady, who was then a devoted Christian and active in the reformation. But in the early part of her life, according to her own showing, her mind had been involved in the gloomy theory of Atheism. To her deluded understanding nothing declared or revealed the truth of a supreme eternal cause, till, on one memorable evening, as she, in contemplative mood, sat gazing on the star-lighted heavens, her attention became fixed on the cluster of sparkling bodies called the *seven stars*, which were directly before her, and providentially seemed to respond to her inquisitive gaze. "Something," she said, "then appeared, in that constellation of stars, entirely new to her vision—something august, sublime, and wonderful." She had seen them often twinkle and shine, but now they seemed to speak as well as shine: they unitedly spoke, as if inspired, and sent, with power, to the centre of her thinking soul, this foundation truth:—"*There is a God.*" The evidence of the existence of a Supreme Divinity she saw, indescribably written, in the radiance of those luminaries, which left an unperishable belief of the fact deeply imprinted on her mind.

Though freed from the error of Atheism, this lady still retained, as she said, skeptical notions respecting

the immortality of the soul, and the future misery of impenitent sinners. About this time her uncle died, who had lived a careless, prayerless life; and left the world without any apparent change. "One evening," she said, "I retired to my chamber alone—after extinguishing the light, and while musing on my couch, in a state of wakefulness, suddenly a dismal light appeared in the room. Without feeling any dread, I gazed at it, wondering, and distinctly saw, in the centre of the light, the exact figure and dress of my deceased uncle. While the pale horrid light flitted around, the ghastly figure moved slowly along toward me, and stopped by the side of my bed, where it stood, motionless, with a gloomy countenance, looking wishfully on me. With a perfectly fearless state of mind I thus questioned myself—Is it a spirit, or is it substance? Resolved to know, by actual experiment, I stretched my arm from the bed, and drew it slowly till it passed through the figure, separating it as easily as if it had been a column of smoke. The figure then instantly disappeared, carrying its own dismal light with it, and left the room in the natural darkness of night."

A strange sense of fear, she said, immediately fell upon her, which caused her to shriek aloud. The scene, however, was so convincing that her doubts were overpowered by the force of evidence; and, hence, she became established in the truth of divine revelation, the immortality of the soul, and the misery of incorrigible sinners in a future state. The sight of one miserable ghost told, emphatically, the whole story to her without uttering a word.

This lady, influenced by saintly zeal, seized every convenient opportunity to enlighten my mind, and to direct me to the strait gate and narrow way. After suffering some time under a weight of moral death, as I was looking to the Saviour for the promised and expected salvation, a change came over me which removed my gloomy feelings, and filled my heart with gladness. This change of heart, this supernatural work, being new to me, I did not fully understand its nature or evidences. Hence this joyful change of feeling did not confirm me in the belief that my sins were forgiven—that I was a child of God. I was expecting something great and satisfactory; but what it would consist in, or what way it would be communicated, I had formed no correct conceptions.

So, with my different feelings, I went on as before, seeking and praying for the remission of my sins, till, on a memorable night, I obtained the evidence—the witness of the Spirit sealed upon my heart. That evening a meeting was appointed for prayer, about one quarter of a mile from my father's residence—it so happened that my parents were not at the meeting. Many gathered to the appointed place, some of whom were rejoicing in the liberty of salvation, while others were sorrowing in deep distress of mind. After singing a suitable hymn, we all knelt before the throne of grace to pray, and to give ourselves to God, in a sacred covenant. As the devotional exercise progressed, sighs and awful wailings were heard, rising from every part of the congregation. The lady of the house, together with others, who were in extreme agony of soul, cried aloud for mercy—no one rebuked

them for crying. It was an awful, overwhelming season. The sound broke the repose and stillness of the night, and was borne along the valley, and fell impressively on the sleepless organs of my dear parents at home.

While these exercises were going on around me I was knelt, before a bench, in deep thoughtfulness, wrapped almost in speechless awe. My mind, at the time, was so abstracted from the things of earth, and absorbed in carefulness about my own soul, that time moved onward unnoticed, and the cries and distress of others passed over me like sounds in a dream. Our minister and our pious friends, like guardian angels, remained with us, praying, with ceaseless solicitude, for our salvation; and speaking to us often to keep the promises of God before our mental vision.

The distress of my mind at that time, however, did not proceed from a burden of guilt and condemnation, as before. But my labour was an intense desire to be a Christian—I wanted a knowledge and witness of the fact imprinted on my heart. While I was there knelt before the Lord, with the eye of my mind directed heavenward, a strait gate appeared to my view, which, it seemed, I had entered; and directly before me a beautiful narrow way opened, ascending to the throne of God. And on each side of this celestial highway I descried a dreary desert, where I saw many of my wretched fellow-beings wandering in darkness, entangled with spells and snares, groping their way amidst the dismal chaos. While gazing with wonder on the scene around me, I thought that I saw the glorious Angel of the covenant descending on this heavenly

road, and, as he came near, part of his crimson mantle seemed to wave over me, impressing my mind, at the same time, with this solemn charge, "*Doubt no more!*"

All this I believed was only a wakeful, ideal vision, which passed before the eye of my mind at the time. Still it might have been the effect of some supernatural agency. These views, however, did not constitute any part of the foundation of my Christian hope. Benevolent feelings, love to God and his cause, a concern for the souls of my fellow-mortals, together with the peace, assurance, and faith which I felt, at the time, formed the basis of my hope. These evidences, to my conscious mind, possessed the power and attributes of a reality. These heaven-born feelings and blessings, which I had felt before and then enjoyed, established the fact that I had before received the remission of my sins—that when the burden of condemnation rolled off and left my mind in a tranquil, happy state—then I was renewed in spirit, and passed from death to life. So the events of that night confirmed me in the belief that I was in the kingdom of grace. My enraptured spirit was borne on the wings of faith and love, while my mortal frame was bent before the throne of grace. The night, I found, had passed away like a dream. The harbinger of day was entering the windows as the meeting came to a close.

My sister Betsey, who was younger than myself, was one among the number, who, that night, obtained a happy deliverance from sin. It was a joyful morning to us, and to many. Everything in nature appeared to wear a new aspect. Heaven and earth seemed to

rejoice together, while our youthful hearts exulted, with rapture unknown before. The minister requested us, before we left the place, to declare to our friends what great things the Lord had wrought for us, which obvious duty we performed with pleasure.

As the influence of the mighty reformation spread, my oldest brother, Nicholas, came into the kingdom of grace, after enduring many conflicts with the common enemy, who followed him with sore temptations. At length, the angels in heaven, and all of us, rejoiced over my dear parents, who also were consoled with redeeming grace. Finally, the whole family, and almost the entire neighbourhood, together with many in the adjoining settlements, became subjects of the blessed work. The wilderness and solitary places were glad. The trees clapped their hands, while the valleys echoed the sound of the triumphal songs of free grace and free salvation.

Many of the subjects of this powerful reformation were attended with strange and wonderful operations, which confounded both the subtle reasoner and the skeptical philosopher. The invisible cause, which produced these operations, seemed first to seize on the mental powers, then, like electricity, it found ready conductors to the material structure of the body; and during the operation it generally suspended the power of muscular motion, and the power of speech, frequently leaving the organs of sight and hearing unobstructed: at the same time, the mental powers were in wakeful activity, while the mortal form resembled a lifeless body—still the functions of the arterial system were unrestrained. Life's crimson

streams flowed along their wonted channels with perfect regularity, which confounded the acute physical examiner, who could not discover the least symptom of any disease in the system to produce the strange operation. It appeared to be a visible effect without a natural cause.

In some instances the entire body of the subject was in a state of total relaxation: the elastic power of the muscular system seemed wholly suspended. In others a total tenseness of the muscles and tendons appeared: the joints of the body became fixed, the fingers refused to turn on the hinges constructed for the purpose. Still, no indications of any pain or distress could be discovered in any of the subjects while under the operation.

These occurrences were not only common in the time of public worship, but some were frequently seized while in their secret devotions, at home, and likewise while at their usual employments. Both male and female, the strong muscular frame and the feeble constitution, were alike affected in this mysterious manner. It is moreover true that all the saints were not brought under these powerful influences; nor were they confined to Christians only; the unregenerate were often seized, and that suddenly too, with the same operations,—it was observed, however, that their conversion generally followed soon after. I will only relate the case of a gay young lady, who was standing, in company with her pious brother and two or three other persons, singing the following couplets:

"Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone,
He whom I fix my hopes upon:

His track I see, and I'll pursue
The narrow way till him I view."

After singing a few lines the lady fell upon the floor, as suddenly as if she had been struck with lightning; and there cried ardently for mercy, while we offered our supplications in her behalf. So we were compelled to believe that the same invisible power which brought Saul trembling to the ground, struck this lady to the floor.

During the progress of this wonderful reformation, I knew a pious youth who had never been affected by these mighty influences, till, one evening, in a prayer meeting, while he was struggling for a holy heart, something ran through his whole frame quick as an electrical shock—still he knew that the sensation was very different. He was instantly alarmed, for a thought rushed into his mind that it was a paralytic affection: soon as that fear gained the ascendency in his mind, the sensation left him; and left him as suddenly as it came. In a moment he perceived that doubt and fear did not belong to living faith: he had yielded to unbelief, hence, like Peter on the waves, he began to sink. Immediately he cast away all his faithless fears, and called on God to send down the Holy Spirit again; and, instantaneously, his prayer was attended with the return of the same wonderful operation.

Since that memorable reformation I have seen many under similar operations, at different times, and in various places. Though these occurrences have been so common, in the great revivals of religion in our land, still various and conflicting opinions have agitated the thinking world concerning their cause.

Frequent examinations have been made; and after all, the phenomenon lies too deep in mystery to admit of a solution upon philosophical principles. Why are some affected and others not?—why are the operations made to differ? No one can tell. Some have been inclined to believe that these effects are only the symptoms of the exhaustion of nervous energy; but this opinion is doubtful:—for exhaustion of nervous energy is the effect of some disease. Besides, we know that many of these persons are vigorous, and in perfect health. In cases where the energy of the nerves is exhausted by any natural cause, no symptoms appear analogous to these operations. In the cases of fainting or common paroxysms, it is obvious that the symptoms are specifically different from these religious cases; and the consequent effects on the system afterward are as unlike as the operations are dissimilar. By the laws of sympathy the body and mind act upon each other; and, also, one mind mysteriously acts upon another at certain times. Therefore the inspiring mind of God operating on the human intellect must produce uncommon effects; hence, by the laws of sympathy, the mind, being thus graciously affected, will produce, under certain circumstances, strange operations on the body, differing from the effects of any natural cause. Besides, it is a fact which should be remembered, that these operations occur nowhere, under no circumstances, but in religious meetings, or some devout exercise—powerful revivals have been famous for such events: hence they must be classed among the marvellous works of the Holy Spirit in the kingdom of grace.

I was intimately acquainted with a noted physician, in Oneida county, after he became converted from infidelity to the Christian religion, who, to satisfy himself, carefully and critically examined, at different times, persons under these strange operations; and he candidly said, "that no indications appeared of any disease, or natural cause, to produce the effects." Hence he declared "that all we could do, in explaining the mystery, was, merely to say, that it is the effect of the power of God, and there leave it."

CHAPTER IV.

Nature's language—The Bible—Duty—Call to preach—Elm tree—Licensed to exhort—Observations—Quarterly meetings—Form of religion—Authorized to preach—Militia company—Feelings and views respecting war—Soldier under Christ—Camp meeting—Lorenzo Dow—Free salvation—Government of the voice.

AFTER I became initiated into the high mystery of pure religion, I beheld the world with different views and feelings; everything seemed to wear a new aspect. Though Nature travelled on in her wonted track, controlled by the same unvarying laws, still she seemed to speak a language more impressive to my youthful mind. Every part of the great material system declared more emphatically and fully the wisdom, power, and glory of the Creator. The universe seemed to be filled with tongues, and every tongue was sounding the praise of God—grass waving, flowers opening, leaves quivering, streams gliding, winds whistling, birds singing, and flocks bleating, all combined in one grand concert, and filled the wide orchestra of nature with artless praise to the great Lord of the universe.

The Holy Scriptures, that complicated book of wisdom, I found was fraught with pure instruction, which impressed a sacred charm on my happy soul unknown before. Every part of that amazing system I saw abounded with reality: its ponderous pages contained no hollow fiction, to delude the reader's mind into the maze of folly and error. I read it with pleasure, and the more I read the wiser I grew: it expanded

my understanding, and elevated my thoughts. After being illuminated by these living oracles, romances and novels, the creatures of human fancy, appeared more vile and worthless than ever to my eye. In the Bible, that inestimable gift of God, I learned the important purpose and end of my creation. There with pleasure I contemplated on the scale of gradation, designed for the souls of the redeemed, which opened an ample field for the range of thought from this mortal region, the cradle of being, to the high and highest heaven. There I learned also how a connection was formed between the spiritual world and this world of matter; and a communication kept up between the two regions by the Spirit of God and the ministry of angels.

My duty—what Heaven required of me—was an important question at this early juncture. The relation to my Creator in some essential points had been changed. By the supernatural work of regeneration I had become a child of God. A great sacrifice—a price exceeding all calculation—had been paid for my redemption. Therefore I belonged to Jesus Christ—was wholly his property. So I was made by sacred obligations an insolvent debtor; and my Redeemer held an eternal irredeemable mortgage on my soul and body. Moreover, I was bound to render to him, continually, the tribute of all my poor imperfect services, for gifts and graces which I was receiving from him daily. So I had no surplus merit or services to apply on any part of the interest on the great debt. Through his abounding clemency, however, my Saviour assigned me an office—made me a steward in his great house:

time, life, and talents, were committed to my care, for all which I was made accountable; and laid under a solemn charge to improve them according to his direction; and only for his glory. In this light I saw that everything I had to do on earth was wisely cast in the mould of duty by the express command of God. Nothing was left out of the divine supervision to be supplied by blind, erring chance, or by wild, human imagination. The direction and glory of God, and my own interest, were so commingled that all vile selfishness was excluded. In rendering service to the Almighty I was securing my own happiness; and in caring lawfully for my soul and body I was honouring and obeying God. This rule of action I also found in Jehovah's book of laws, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." So I learned the origin, nature, and sacredness of my duty.

Soon after my adoption into the family of Heaven, I was strongly impressed to pray in public, and to communicate my views and feelings in religious meetings. But being young, naturally fearful, and unaccustomed to address mixed assemblies, I was brought into a painful strait. To refuse to yield to a divine requirement would bring on me the disapprobation of Heaven; and to attempt to do what seemed to me impossible was truly distressing. I had thought that it would be a pleasure to me to do every duty; but I found, in the experiment, that the fear of man brought a snare to my soul. Hence in a few instances, as others did to their harm, I made an unjustifiable decision, rebelled against the leadings of the Spirit, which brought

upon my soul distress and gloominess. So I soon learned that disobedience ensured spiritual death. Therefore I resolved, sink or swim, live or die, I would endeavour to do the will of my merciful God.

So, like a whipped child, with fear and trembling I began to speak some solemn words for God, and pray in our social meetings. Soon after, agreeably to the wishes of my brethren in the church, I consented to take charge of a class in an adjoining neighbourhood, where I had an opportunity to warn careless sinners, and encourage the Christian brethren to persevere in a life of faithfulness. In my feeble efforts to do good to others I received strength and consolation—the promises of God were verified to me.

The weighty things of religion occupied the greatest portion of my attention while at home, in my accustomed routine of business. There my thoughts were often so abstracted from the things of earth, and concentred in heavenly contemplation, that I could scarcely tell how the work of my hands advanced. One memorable day, while I was under the lofty branches of a gigantic elm that stood near my father's house, which, for some reason, was left standing when the forest was hewn down around it, the Spirit of God came down upon me, and, in a mysterious manner, called me to preach the everlasting gospel, by a perceptible, inward voice; to which I responded, by expressing a willingness of mind to do whatsoever my Lord and Master required at my hands. But to be an ambassador for Christ, to be intrusted with the great message of salvation to a fallen world, I conceived was a charge too high for a timid youth,

unknown abroad, and unacquainted with theology. Moreover, to preach, extemporaneously, was an eminence in rhetoric which, it appeared to me, I was never endowed to reach. Hence, I there put myself under a solemn vow to God, that I would imbody my thoughts in writing, and publish them to the world, if that would fulfil the weighty requirement.

The place distinguished by this moving occurrence appears still solemn to me; and I often contemplate on it with emotions of awe and delight, though the memorable tree, the ancient elm, is not there. After enduring the storms of a hundred years it fell a sacrifice to the crushing powers of time, and is gone down to sleep in ashes, to rise no more to leafy honours, despoiled of a successor, without a kindred branch to tell where it stood. Not so with mortal, immortal man, the holy Christian man; he dies, and yet lives. He not only lives in a perpetual kindred succession, but he truly lives while he lives; lives when he dies, lives after he is dead, and will live for ever. But the impenitent sinner is dead while he lives; dies hopeless when he dies; and dies continually after he is dead.

The exercise of my mind concerning my proper sphere of duty, by some means, to me unknown, was understood by my Christian brethren, who appeared anxious that I should improve my talents as Providence seemed to direct. Accordingly, through their friendly management, I obtained a license, by which I was authorized to proclaim the word of God to my fellow-mortals by way of exhortation. This I viewed as a door opened before me to prove the reality of my call

to the ministry, which appeared to be done by the direction of Providence, and was also in accordance with the deep impressions on my own mind. Hence, I resolved that I would be faithful, and improve the gifts which the Lord had already given me; then if he should require of me any further service he would endow me with additional talents to accomplish the end.

While acting under my brief authority, I was invited to labour in the adjacent towns and settlements, where I found attentive congregations willing to listen to the admonitions of a stripling. It was, however, a wonder to me that so many would forego their rest, and travel miles, to hear a young raw student in divinity declaim. To see congregations excited, and tears flowing from many eyes, by such feeble means, was still more surprising. It is true that I felt a pious ardour glowing in my soul, and I was anxious that sinners should know the great salvation. Therefore, I spoke earnestly, plainly, and from the depth of my heart. As means to concentrate my thoughts, I often quoted some passages of Scripture at the commencement of my discourse; and, frequently, I attempted to give some illustrations of the text. But I always endeavoured to keep out on the wide ocean of truth. Hence I could echo to the people what God had declared in his word, if nothing more. Whether my labours, at that time, were beneficial to my hearers or not, the solemn facts eternity will unfold. One thing, however, is certain, that by doing my duty I kept a sinless conscience, and rejoiced in God my Saviour.

To commence speaking by exhortation is doubtless the best mode of procedure for a young man who is

intending to preach extemporaneously; for, by so doing, he will slide into a happy, easy manner of speaking and thinking; and when that point is gained, he can without embarrassment bring all his thoughts under the proper rules of order as they come winged and ardent from his burning soul. A great exhorter, in the high sense of the term, is truly a great preacher; for he preaches much in his exhortations. To declaim, to advise, to warn, to persuade, to entreat with tears, all are comprised in the ample range of exhortation. And, in doing this awfully sublime work, the depths of human learning may be opened, the wide field of revelation explored, its doctrines brought up, its promises spread out, together with the rousing of Sinai's thunder, and the blood and groans of Calvary.

The common plan, in sermonizing, where method in the illustration is the first object, resembles the arrangement of an army for an assault—the lines are formed, divisions planned, and all put in motion; thence every division is seen coming up, converging toward the castle they design to storm. But, in the winding up of the sermon, exhortation comes in as an auxiliary; then the holy effort resembles an army in the act of storming the castle:—strange terrors pour into Satan's citadel; his strong-holds tremble like an aspen leaf; the enemies of God turn pale; and, as a victory-shout comes up from Messiah's sacramental host, a mighty rush is made; the flashing sword of the Spirit is buried in the hearts of Jehovah's enemies. So a conquest over sin and Satan is gained, sinners are subdued and saved, Christians strengthened, and the grand end of the gospel ministry accomplished.

Our quarterly meetings, in those days, were held in places remote from us, on account of the smallness of the societies, and their distance apart. One of these meetings which I attended was held in the town of Westmoreland, about thirty miles from my residence; Rev. Wm. M'Lanahan was the presiding elder; and there, for the first and last time, I saw Bishop Whatcoat, who, in his official tour through the state, came into the town at this favourable time, where many had the gratification to see the venerable servant of God, and hear him expound the Holy Scriptures. In appearance and manner he was grave and dignified; and seemed to possess the happy ability to communicate great things, clearly, in plain language. His wisdom raised him above affectation, which made his instructions acceptable to us all. He was doubtless a sound divine, if not a brilliant preacher. He expounded the fifteenth verse of the eighty-ninth Psalm: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." The subject itself was delicious; and the doctrine, brought out in the illustration of it, was like milk and honey to our newly-converted souls. We, who came from a distance, were richly compensated for our toil. There we commingled our devotions with some happy brethren who were strangers to us before. Indeed, the place seemed like the gate of heaven; though the building in which we worshipped was only a rough barn, it was honoured with the presence of God. In spiritual Zion Jehovah has established the throne of his glory.

As time rolled onward, the day appointed for another quarterly meeting came, which was held in Burlington, a town adjoining. As churches were not erected then, a spacious barn was put in preparation for a temporary place of worship. The presiding elder and some of the old sons of thunder were present, together with a multitude of pious brethren from every part of the country around. The love-feast on Sunday morning was a refreshing season: a mighty invisible influence descended from above, which appeared to enter the east corner of the building, and passed, like a gust of wind, in a narrow vein through the whole extent of the congregation, affecting deeply every person in its direction. It seemed to inspire every one it touched with rapturous feelings, for a shout of triumph sounded along its course as it moved. In the afternoon of the same day also a mighty excitement was felt throughout the whole assembly; careless sinners became alarmed, and, though the rain poured down without, they rushed in haste into the pitiless shower. Elder Turk, one of the rough-hewers of those days, cried out to them, thus, "Sinners, you are chained—if you run from the power of God, the devil will have you."

By experience, observation, and reading, I learned that the forms of religion were necessary; for without them the power of religion could not exist in the heart. The formalities constituted the visible body of religion, the spirit and power the essential attributes. The forms, I discovered, could be copied and learned; but the power of religion was an experimental work wrought in the believer's heart by the operations of the power of God, including regeneration, justifica-

tion, and sanctification. In this, I saw, consisted the spirit and living essence of Bible religion. Without this holy, spiritual life, all the forms of godliness, however pompous, high-sounding, and imposing, were nothing more than heartless acts, and sounds of solemn mockery. Moreover, the forms, I perceived, did not correct the errors of the head, or change the heart, or reform the life, of the dronish, faithless formalist. But the power of grace, I well knew from experience, enlightens the understanding, subdues the heart, and makes the life of the Christian consistent and good.

As St. Paul said to the Romans, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death"—so I could say. This was the substance of my experience. Into the perfection and glory of this spiritual religion I was born anew; and thereby made a child of God, a branch in the mystical vine, and an heir of heaven. And, by the consecration of my soul and body to God in a sacred baptismal vow, I became a visible subject of his kingdom, under the common, holy seal of Heaven. And then, by the regulation of His government, I was made subject to his direction under the agency of the church. Hence, as soon as Providence opened the door, by the concurrent acts of the official members of the church, I accepted without hesitation a license to preach. Still I knew that my charge would increase in extent and weight, in exact ratio with every step I advanced in the church. To be a messenger of Heaven; to expound the Holy Scriptures;

and to build up the church of God in wisdom and holiness; seemed too high a ministration for my limited powers. But I was under a vow, and I must make the experiment. Though I could not climb to the topmost limbs of divinity, I could touch some of the lower branches, and gather such fruit as hung within my reach. So, in an humble way, I might be enabled to feed a multitude, if they should be hungry for the bread of life.

Soon after receiving license to preach I arrived at an age which subjected me to an enrolment in a militia company; hence I was notified to appear and answer to the imperious call of the martial law. Accordingly, I went and entered the ranks, but not equipped with the arms of death. The only weapon I carried was a rough walking stick; but in this I was not alone, for these raw soldiers were not advanced to the degree of uniformity. After displaying our ludicrous skill in exercising awhile, the important period arrived to inspire the soldiers with courage: a rule of duty long established by custom—*rum* was the subtle agent required to produce the nervous charm. Soon I beheld the bottled energy coming along down the ranks, from hand to hand, directly toward me; as it came near, I stepped back a pace or two to let the abomination pass, without incurring the guilt of handing it on to the next one in rank. The officers, discovering that I had retreated a few steps, which, I confess, appeared somewhat cowardly, and that too from their old friend Alcohol, came forward, and very kindly entreated me to take the bottle, adding withal, that it would be good for me, and not harmful. But I refused the fashionable poison; though it required some

courage to brave the current of this detestable custom. When I joined the M. E. Church I became bound by her practical rules not to use ardent spirits as a drink. This pledge I entered in the year 1800, and was resolved to keep it at home and abroad. So I stood there as a cowardly soldier, afraid of the bottle, quite too singular to be on the parade-ground. Moreover, I had insulted Alcohol, their much-esteemed companion; and that too in the open field, which gave offence to some of the old soldiers. I was not only disgusted with their fashion of drinking, but the whole military duty, from beginning to end, was repugnant to my views and feelings. Hence I resolved, as soon as practicable, to obtain a discharge from these unpleasant liabilities.

From reading the sayings of Christ, serious doubts arose in my mind respecting the right Christians have, under the gospel dispensation, to bear arms in the school of death. Malice, revenge, retaliation, and shedding blood, are all reprobated by the unerring Author of mercy. If Jesus Christ has made no provision for a defensive war, who dare, in defiance of his government, commence hostilities against any of his moral subjects? All the conflicting claims, among nations and tribes of men, might be settled without the flow of blood, or sacrifice of life. To assault or to revenge is not the law of right: "Therefore all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This is the gospel equipoise, the grand scales given by Jesus Christ, in which all nations and individuals should weigh their words and actions. And the benevolent feelings infused into my

heart by the power of grace, I could not reconcile with a life of barbarous warfare—man shedding the blood of his fellow-man. Moreover, the compassionate Saviour said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." Still, I was led to inquire, why he said to his disciples, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." The hour of temptation had come. And it appears that the disciples had not then learned the nature or tactics of their Master's warfare—or the weapons designed to be used therein. Therefore their Master said to them, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." It is presumed, however, that they were unwilling to sell their coats for swords, and then go on without their needful covering—their Master proposing no other way to obtain them. "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords." The Saviour immediately replied, "It is enough"—enough for what? to conquer the Romans—to defend themselves against their armed neighbours if they should fall upon them? No—enough to teach them and the whole world a lesson which should stand on record for ever.

So the disciples carried the two swords along with them; but no occasion presented which seemed to require the use of such deadly weapons, till the gloomy, perilous night came, in which their Master was betrayed. As the band came up to arrest the Prince of peace, Peter hastily, without permission from his Lord, drew his sword and wielded it in his defence, and cut off Malchus's ear. Then Jesus turned and said to Peter with authority, "Put up again thy sword into

his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." This seemed to be a changeless interdiction on the use of deadly weapons. Mark what follows—Jesus, seeing the injury done by the bloody weapon to one of his foes, said to the wounded man, "Suffer ye thus far." "And he touched his ear and healed him." This kind, miraculous act, was alone enough to confute and confound his most inveterate enemies!

If to found an earthly empire had been the Saviour's object in coming into the world, the chiefs in the hierarchy of the Jewish nation would have arrayed themselves in his defense, and crowned him with honour and applause. Though he was a king—a king immortal, they did not respect him as such, because he led no pompous hosts to battle; drove no thundering chariots, nor wielded bloody weapons. The kingdom of Christ was spiritual, erected on the changeless basis of *truth* and *mercy:* therefore the proud, carnal Jews, were offended, and rejected his claim as Lord and Messiah. He taught them the doctrine of benevolence: to love their enemies, to render to them kind and merciful acts—not evil. And, with tones of authority, he reprimanded the vices and blindness of the nation, which disgusted the unholy ears of the nobility of Judea.

In this light I was led by the unerring Scriptures to view the subject of warfare among the children of men. My religious feelings also inclined me to promote peace, and not aid contention—to save the life of man, and not to destroy it. Hence as soon as this doubtful question was decided in the negative, namely,

"Whether a licensed preacher having no charge of a congregation were subject to do military duty?" I received a prompt discharge from the school of war, and was seen no more on the parade-ground.

I held myself a soldier, nevertheless, a soldier under Jesus Christ, the great Captain over the army of saints, with whom I was marshalled, and moving slowly on to final conquest. The easy lessons in the art of this holy warfare I had already learned; and was making some proficiency in the use of my new and costly armour, which I drew on the order of Christ from the magazine of heaven. In the kingdom of grace the wisdom of God has prepared the means so as to accomplish the end. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." In this spiritual contest against the world, the flesh, and the devil, I had enlisted; and all the powers of my soul were roused to activity, urging me on to the battle. A mighty zeal abounded in my heart, and sometimes, perhaps, it outstripped my knowledge. Zeal and effort, however, I saw were necessary to confront the vile world, and to stimulate the friends of Zion to laudable activity. The cause which I had espoused, I knew, was great and good; the victory ensured to the faithful; and the reward immortal glory. Therefore I was not beating the air.

In those days it was announced that a camp meeting would be held in the town of Western, over forty miles from my father's residence; and the time for its commencement was drawing near. The intelligence awakened the attention of community: camp meetings

were new things—wonders in the land. Various opinions were advocated respecting the use and propriety of such meetings. To those whose views of religion had been cut and made by what they thought perfect forms and settled customs, to go into the wilderness to worship appeared highly improper; and to eat and sleep in the tented woods was shocking to their feelings, and in their eyes very imprudent. Moreover, such strange meetings would introduce innovations among long-established usages, produce changes in the views of many in community, and disturb the common order of things. Indeed, in the view of some, the camp-meeting project seemed as wild, and as great an aburdity, as if a mariner had madly said that he would drive his vessel by steam-power against tides and winds, and so change the mode of navigation.

Though unacquainted with camp meetings, I had no prejudices to counteract; I was delighted with the enterprise. A field of promise, to my understanding, opened in the design, sufficiently wide to induce me to attend the one which was at hand. Among other circumstances of interest, it was published that the celebrated Lorenzo Dow would be at the meeting, and officiate in his peculiar way, which awakened a curiosity in my mind to enjoy the opportunity, though I had seen him once, and heard him preach.

So in due time I set off in company with a social friend, a pious intelligent youth of the same faith; and both of us aiming to be useful in the same cause. A common sympathy existed between us, growing out of an acquaintance, and the relation we held to the

church. By the interchange of thoughts on the way our journey was made pleasant and profitable: with bounding hearts we moved along over the rough road, reflecting on the past, and cogitating on the events to come. So the time passed away till we arrived at the place we were so anxious to gain.

According to our expectations, we found the forest converted into holy ground, and, temple-like, consecrated to the worship of God. Rough seats, arranged with due design, were prepared to accommodate the worshipping assembly. On one side of the ground an elevated platform appeared, built of logs and floored, which was designed merely for the sacred rostrum. The forest trees, like lofty columns, stood in the order in which nature had placed them, whose wide-spread arms, intersecting, formed verdant arches high over the hallowed ground, waving gently as the winds played among the branches. The place was delightful. And there, in accordance with my wishes, I found, in company with other ministers, the Rev. Lorenzo Dow, who was looked upon as an oracle.

Mr. Dow's physical appearance was in some degree forbidding; his frame was slender, flexile, and spare; features small and pointed, and he had a natural or affected stoop forward. His voice, though not loud, was nevertheless forcible; its tones were naturally adapted to the feminine key; while addressing assemblies he indulged a habit of protracting some tones of his voice to a painful length, which was truly disgusting to a delicate ear: still it passed for perfection in him, because it was an attribute in his peculiar character. His tufted, sable hair, hung forward over

his shoulders, and there came in contact with his beard, which grew unmolested by a razor. His countenance was stamped with gravity, while his small piercing eyes glanced terrific reproofs wherever he looked. His appearance altogether was very singular.

Though the bodily presence of the man indicated weakness, still he possessed the hidden power of endurance. Independence and perseverance were prominent traits in his character. He had a strong mental sagacity, by which he often penetrated deeply into the arcanum of spiritual things. His discourses were in keeping with his general appearance, all perfect samples of singularity: systematical rules he did not regard as essential to the right administration of the gospel —to alarm sinners and save souls. He could reason clearly, and often did so, in his discourses: yes, he could preach and appear as other men did, but he would not—probably from conscientious motives. His style was plain and tolerably good, except his frequent use of low vulgarisms, which seemed to lessen the sanctity of his discourses.

He evidently studied to be singular in everything; and, by the influence of these intentional oddities, he was thrown into an orbit distinct from all others, and left to move alone in his glory. So he became a wonder and a spectacle for the world to behold. In this way attractions were thrown around him, which drew multitudes to hear him preach; and by these means he became universally known, highly respected by many, and revered by some as an oracle inspired. Like other men in bodies of clay, he had many bright spots in the nucleus of his character, together with some

shades of imperfection and human frailties. He styled himself a citizen of the world, and made the continent his circuit. His toils and ministerial labours were amazing; and his privations and sufferings were as great as his labours. It is truly wonderful how such a slender frame, with an asthmatical disease at the vitals, could endure so much fatigue, and endure it so long. He was evidently a child of Providence, called by the Holy Ghost to preach, and made an instrument, through abounding grace, of doing much good.

Good order prevailed on the consecrated ground; and, to my view, the scene was solemn and interesting. The native wildness of the place, the sound of human voices uttering devout supplications, and singing the songs of Zion, produced a strange effect on the listening ear; and the exciting tones of the heralds of salvation, bringing good news to lost sinners, echoed delightfully through the wilderness. Young and green as I was in the ministry, I yielded to the request of my superiors, and attempted to preach. The following words, written by St. Paul to Timothy, constituted the text: "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It was doubtless a small production; I however had liberty in speaking, and the congregation listened with due attention. When the meeting came to a close I retired from the place greatly benefited, and went home in a peaceful state of mind.

In reading the Holy Scriptures I learned the fact that the doctrine of free salvation was not an invention of man; but it had its origin in the infinite

wisdom and love of God; and that grace emanates as freely from the throne of mercy, as light from the radiant sun—as the waving air which surrounds our world—as rivers on their way to the ocean; which doctrine is established by the following passages: "Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."—"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him."—"For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live."—"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

This grand system of salvation, devised for man and first proclaimed by angels to the shepherds of Judea, expanded, filled, and enraptured my soul. To be an ambassador for Christ, commissioned from the high court of Heaven to deliver such a weighty message to the inhabitants of this sinful planet, was, in my estimation, the highest office, and greatest honour, ever conferred on mortal man. Crowns, titles, embassies from earthly princes, all appeared small and worthless to me when comparatively viewed. The ruling desire of my heart was to be qualified and

worthy to move and shine among the stars of the church, in this high and useful calling.

The solemn vows which I was under to God, together with a view of the wretched condition of the moral world, excited me to live by faith and speak with zeal. Accordingly, I went on proclaiming the doctrine of perfect love to believers; and admonishing sinners to fear, repent, and believe: while in weakness I addressed the ear, the God of truth and power touched the heart. As the truth, which I delivered, affected my own heart, in the same degree it often affected the hearts of those whom I addressed; and as they appeared to be affected, so, by the reciprocal laws of sacred sympathy, I became more affected, and that, too, on their account—my feelings commingled with theirs. So I was often carried away into extreme efforts by the strong current of emotions which was moving around me, and within me; till I almost forgot myself. The duty to keep my voice under due control I neglected, and often continued speaking too long; hence my vital energy, by degrees, began to fail, which not only depressed my spirits, but seemed to augur a defeat of my future usefulness.

To speak correctly, intelligibly, and forcibly, are important matters. To speak easily, naturally, and fluently, with a pleasing musical tone of voice, is also a desirable acquisition for a public speaker. Some men, by nature, are endowed with vocal organs more finely constructed than others. One has naturally a rough, obstreperous voice, while another has a voice inclined to be soft and harmonious. Every natural voice, however, may be improved by diligence and

artful care. But this work should always begin with the commencement of public labour; then the speaker should subject his manner and voice to the dictation of proper discipline, before any incorrect habits, in speaking, become adopted. It is always easier to avoid improprieties of any kind, than to correct them after they become established.

The organs of the human voice are curiously and wonderfully constructed, capable of great expansion and contraction, by which a variety of tones are produced, from the low grave bass to the fine thrilling treble, the grum and soft, the rough and smooth, all are made by the same piece of organic mechanism. This natural vibrating instrument, with all its fibrous component parts, is under the control of the mind, an invisible agent, whose volant power is the musician that moves every sounding string of this harmonical machine. Many, by not understanding the philosophy of the human voice, the delicate formation of the vocal organs, and the diseases to which these tender membraneous parts are exposed, have heedlessly and ignorantly gone on till they have ruined their voices, and brought upon themselves painful and incurable diseases.

CHAPTER V.

Situation—Divine aid—Recommended to travel—Seneca circuit—Journey—Commencement—Inhabitants—Colleague—Mode of preaching—Medical works—Old fort—Jemima Wilkerson—Remarkable case—Camp meeting—Reflections—Wilderness—Accommodations—Support—Sickness—Divine government—End of the year.

At this time I was moving in a local sphere in the domestic circle of my dear parents, to whom I was bound by affection, and under obligations, by the law of gratitude, to render service in every way consistent with my other duties. The leisure hours which were exempted from worldly matters I appropriated to study; and on each sabbath I endeavoured to preach in destitute places, as Providence seemed to direct. This limited field of labour, however, did not satisfy the ardent desires of my soul; I knew that the Holy Ghost had called me to preach the gospel; and, also, to devote my life and talents exclusively to the sacred ministry. The wide unregenerate world lay continually open to my mental vision; I contemplated on their wretched condition; and saw prophetically their dreadful end; which so affected my heart that I resolved to disengage myself from all secular concerns, as soon as practicable, and go into the holy work.

My future course of duty was apprehended by many of my friends and Christian brethren, some time before I made an open disclosure of my intention and feelings to them. A train of circumstances, under the control of Providence, opened the way before me by preparing their minds for the event. My parents were

led to believe that the call of Heaven would take me away from them; and they knew that the divine will should be reverenced by submission. Hence they set up no antagonizing claims, or wished to bar or oppose my obvious course of duty; though the ties of affection, instinctively, waked up a degree of reluctance in their minds. To give me up to range the wide and thinly-inhabited wilderness, to suffer sickness, hardship, and persecution, among strangers, far from my paternal home, were considerations truly distressing to the minds of my parents. But they were taught by inspiration, that as they surrendered themselves to God in the hour of their conversion, so they must give up their friends, their children, into the care of the same almighty Providence.

At this time the year 1804 was drawing to a close, and the session of the Philadelphia Conference, which included this region, was not far distant; to which period my attention had been directed for some months with ceaseless solicitude: for that was the time which I had fixed upon to present myself to that body for reception; then to extend my ministerial labours according to the vows I had previously made to God.

The way I found was opening before me; and every necessary plan laid to meet the well-matured purpose. Nothing appeared to bar my course, or to discourage me in my design, but a distressing fear that I should not be able to endure the labour of speaking. I was then suffering under a debilitated state of the vocal organs, evidently caused by over-zealous efforts. To benefit my fellow-mortals I had laboured with perseverance and zeal without any regard to my-

self. No one advised me of the danger I was in, nor had I any fear of injurious consequences, till an inward weakness admonished me to change my mode of speaking. I had serious fears that I should never regain my vital energy; still I kept these thoughts cloistered in my own mind. The presiding elder, when I applied for a recommendation to the annual conference, pressed no inquiries respecting my health. If my vital debility had been fully known, he doubtless would have deemed my attempt a hazardous enterprise; and of course would have deferred action on the case till the expiration of another year: with such an irksome delay I could not reconcile my conscientious feelings. After making the trial, and ascertaining, by actual experiment, that I could not endure the labour, I should then return to a local life with resignation, and a clear conscience.

There was an ardent desire in my mind to make the experiment; and the official brethren, accordingly, recommended me to the Philadelphia Annual Conference, (there were no annual conferences, nor but few circuits in western New-York, at that time,) which set that year, 1805, in Philadephia. There I was admitted into that venerable body on probation, according to the rule of the church; and appointed to travel Seneca circuit, in connection with Rev. Thomas Smith.

This ample circuit covered all that tract of land between the Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, south and west of the Seneca Lake, and north to Lyons; encircling a large extent of country thinly peopled; the inhabitants mostly poor, and all strangers to me. Moreover, I

had learned that it was a sickly region, far from my kindred friends, and old acquaintances. But all these gloomy realities, with others pictured by my excited imagination, did not alarm me, or quench the holy ardour of my soul. I had counted the cost, and weighed the consequences, deliberately, long before I sent up my name to the conference. Therefore I had nothing to do after obtaining knowledge of my appointment, but to equip myself for the gospel field, and go to work.

Everything being prepared for the journey, and the time having arrived for my departure, I tore myself away from my parents, brothers, sisters, and Christian friends, while their good wishes and blessings fell upon me, as I mounted my horse to leave them. Borne on, by my nimble-moving beast, in a few minutes I was out of sight; and busy thought was let loose to range, at large, over the checkered scenes of the past, and to adventure within the veil of the future. After spending a few gloomy days in travelling over rough roads, and through miry forests, I came to the bridge erected over Cayuga Lake, one mile and a quarter in length, which stood as a testimonial of the enterprising spirit of the inhabitants, at that early day. On reaching the western shore of the lake, I passed on, and soon found that I was within the borders of my field of labour. Though oppressed by the fervid beams of the sun, which showed me no more pity than they did Jonah; and withal, very much fatigued with my journey, I felt no disposition to complain. But, with a grateful heart, I pursued my way to a neighbourhood where a society had been formed, and an appointment made for some one to preach, with an

expectation that one of the circuit preachers would be there.

Faint, weary, and depressed in mind, I arrived at the log cottage where the inhabitants were wont to assemble for divine worship. To cheer me, in my introduction, I there found a congregation anxiously waiting for some minister to come and impart the word of life to them; as I came in, they seemed to gaze on me with eyes speaking gladness. Immediately, without any needless ceremony, I made them understand that I was a minister of the gospel, sent to them by the conference. Then, in the name of my holy Master, I took the stand, and preached the great salvation with a degree of liberty.

After I had delivered my message, I accepted an invitation, and went home with a kind Christian brother; in whose habitation I found a resting place for both body and mind during my stay. On the following morning, according to the plan of the circuit, I left the place and went on to my next appointment—thence to the next, and so onward from day to day, till I had travelled round the wide field of my labour; where I found the members of the church, in small companies, scattered along the wilderness, enjoying the consolation of grace and peace.

Though I came here a stranger, I was not a stranger long: I found friends—real friends everywhere, whose prayers and solicitude for my welfare consoled my heart, and animated me in my arduous labour. So I found it true, in this strange land, that the spirit of pure religion is an element which always unites pious spirits, by flowing from soul to soul, producing a

similarity of feeling, and an ardent friendly disposition of heart. Moreover, people in new countries are celebrated for their kindness to each other; and for their hospitality to strangers particularly: they will incommode themselves any way to accommodate a friend, or a stranger in want. Even the Indian will give up his wigwam and fur to a stranger, a friendly white man, and sleep without on the ground. The spontaneous flowings of pious, generous souls, constitute the real sublimity of benevolence: very different from the affected kindness of the proud world, which is heard in empty words from a velvet tongue; and appears in the tinsel of artificial smiles, without any kind emotions at heart.

My colleague in the ministry and myself were unacquainted with each other till we met in the field of our labour. Nevertheless, after our first interview, we became intimate associates, and moved along together in our ministerial calling without giving offence or being offended. Brother Smith was older than myself, and had been longer in the ministry: to him was committed the charge of the circuit. He was a social, complaisant man—cheerfulness and kindness abounded in his disposition. His manner of preaching was smooth, and pleasing to many. He never erred by preaching too long, but, in the judgment of many, his discourses were too contracted.

While labouring to win souls to Christ I was induced, by the laws of reason and experience, to study the philosophy of human nature, to trace effects back to their origin, to examine every question critically; to adopt manner to matter, and the subject to my con-

gregation, to meet every case and circumstance, that each one should have his portion in due season. To meet successfully conflicting opinions, growing out of different modes of education, and to mould the varied elements of human character, seemed to require superior skill and wisdom. Truth—only truth, I was bound to preach, whether it was pleasing to the hearer or offensive. But the manner to be pursued, in presenting the truth to the public mind, I viewed as a matter of choice. To preach plainly and courteously appeared to be more effectual than a harsh dogmatical manner—to save souls being the grand end of the gospel ministry. Besides, I learned that to preach the gospel effectually and powerfully, did not require such vocal efforts as would impair my vital organs, and so destroy both health and usefulness together. Therefore, I began to improve on the management of my voice; and was soon enabled to speak with greater ease, and with more apparent effect than before. And, as a natural consequence, my debilitated lungs regained their wonted energy; which brightened my future prospects, by affording me some assurance, that I should be able to endure the labour of an itinerant minister.

Furthermore, I soon discovered that I was in a region infested with fevers; and I often had to preach in settlements where no physician resided. These circumstances naturally led me to believe that a knowledge of the human system, with an understanding of the diseases prevalent in the country, together with a knowledge of the most effectual remedies, would be an important acquisition for a minister of the gospel in a new country; and, indeed, in any place. Ac-

cordingly I adopted the reading of medicine among my other studies; and pursued it with pleasure and with profit—whence I learned, withal, the useful philosophy of preserving my health, which has been a great benefit to me through every year of my life.

My curiosity was greatly excited while I was visiting a friend, who resided in the region of the Sulphur Springs, on whose farm an ancient fortification stood, approaching nearly to a square, containing about one acre of land. The high embankments on each side still remained, though apparently much diminished by the changing power of time. On one side a level entrance appeared, which was evidently the ancient gate-way into the fort. In the rear of the fortification there was a natural abrupt descent, whence issued a pure living spring of water. Lofty trees, like sentinels, had stood for ages on the embankments, unrelieved and unmolested, till the axe of the industrious emigrant removed them away, and converted the ground, enclosed by the banks, into a beautiful garden, which was protected, by a light fence, on the top of the earthy walls.

While musing on this gloomy pile of art, such serious inquiries occupied my mind:—When was this fortification built? Whose hands raised these walls? Why are we denied a clew to their history? Not one left to tell their origin, name, or end. The dust of their mouldered bodies keep a perpetual silence; and busy nature reveals no secret. No inscriptions are found to tell us what they believed, how they lived, or when they died.

On the western shore of the Seneca Lake we had a

place for divine worship, near a small, but pleasant village, built up by Jemima Wilkerson and her deluded followers. She claimed to be Christ in his second coming; therefore she styled herself the universal Friend, and was so called by her disciples. Their property was made common stock; subject to the supreme dictation of her petty majesty, Jemima. Her followers were instructed to believe that she was immortal—that she would never die. Sickness, however, came upon her in those days, and, like other mortals, she exhibited symptoms of decay. Nevertheless, she assured her disciples that her sickness came in consequence of the wickedness of mankind; and if they did not repent, the Friend would be taken out of the world. To prevent the impending calamity, her disciples made zealous efforts to arouse the fears of the credulous, with a design to bring them over to the faith. Though a feat of deception, the means were effectual in moving some to leave the world, and come into their community. The Friend soon recovered, but died some time afterward, like other mortals.

This pretending woman arose near the place of my nativity; and in that neighbourhood she figured largely, won a number of disciples, who left their homes and friends, and followed her away. According to the account received from my father, she possessed a charming appearance, great confidence and fluency of speech, with a manner both graceful and winning; and seemed completely endowed by nature and art to charm and impose on the credulous. On the day she opened her mission my father was present, who informed me that she stood upon a platform, dressed in

a white robe, which hung flowing to her feet. Thus, with an imposing air, she stood; and with a full clear voice began, saying, "I was in a trance, and heard the Lord inquiring, 'Whom shall I send to warn my people?' and I answered, 'Here am I, Lord, send me.'"

It is well understood that the sacred Bible came by revelation; for that reason every impostor claims a new and immediate revelation from heaven, to give an imposing sanction to the schemes and invented visions which each one is disposed to fabricate. The history of the world presents to our view numerous artful characters of this description, who have acted their varied and shameful tragedies of imposition, by which multitudes, in every age, have been led astray, and lost in the chaos of error.

I clearly saw that the human mind, unrestrained by grace, was continually exposed to wild delusion. A remarkable case of such mental deception came under my observation while travelling there. I was well acquainted with the family to which the subject of this mental aberration belonged. She was a young lady of a brilliant intellect, improved by education, the daughter of a Presbyterian clergyman, whose decease left her under the care of her pious mother. Though matured in knowledge and in years, she, by some means, became a subject of wild enthusiasm. Her strange theories she endeavoured to defend by a pompous display of argument, though they were actually opposed to reason and common sense. "That man has a right to preserve his life, and an equal right to destroy it by violence, if he choose so to do," was one leading article in her graceless creed. No crimi-

nality, she imagined, was connected with the act of self-destruction: at one time she attempted to destroy herself by starvation. She argued, however, not from the Bible, but from the dictation of her own deluded imagination, which she thought was more perfect than the law of God. Like all other fanatical beings, she claimed to be an oracle, wiser than the wisest of her advisers: hence all the arguments and entreaties of her friends appeared to have no good effect upon her. Though some of her acts indicated a degree of mental disorder, still, in her conversation, she appeared perfectly sane.

For some time after I left that country, this lady continued in her various course; and, in the revolution of thought, she exchanged some wild notions for others, till finally she settled on the plausible principles of Universalism. Being in her own estimation fully authorized and qualified to preach an unconditional salvation to all mankind, she came out and figured on a large scale through western New-York, in the character of an itinerant Universalist preacher; and, as a natural consequence, she drew many admirers after her, gained the applause of her brethren, and, by her eloquence, promoted the liberal faith.

While this woman was on her way to enlighten and cheer the gloomy world, the turn of her devious orbit happened to pass through that part of Chenango county where I was then travelling. Influenced by sheer curiosity, I stopped, one day, and heard her declaim from a platform in a barn. A crowd had gathered, and were listening to her amazing discoveries; many

of whom appeared to be very much pleased with the female orator, or her doctrine—perhaps they were charmed with both. Among other things which were said, and not proved, she stated "that sin was only error, existing in thought, abstractly, not in action." To believe in no future judgment day, nor in a state of future misery, seemed, in her view, to be the summit of perfection. This negative faith she imagined would deliver the soul from darkness and error, and bring it into liberty, light, and truth.

What course this female luminary finally took, I have no clew to determine. Whether she flew off in a tangent, and left the track of Universalism to find a more consistent, Scriptural orbit, or whether she fell, like a star, from her giddy elevation, by some unfortunate attraction—or, like a transient meteor, exhausted her light, and sunk down into obscurity, I cannot tell. Therefore, the conclusion of her history I must leave here, and pass on.

At length the time appointed for our camp meeting arrived—the ground selected for that sacred use lay in the bosom of the wilderness, near the western shore of the Seneca Lake. It was truly cheering to meet the disciples of Jesus there, to offer vocal adoration to Heaven in the desert, where once the savage natives roamed, and the wild beasts claimed dominion. Though we were not in Bethlehem, nor on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, nor on the mountain where Jesus preached, nor in the desert where he fed the multitudes, still we were on the same globe which was formed by his own creative power, and under the leafy trees which were planted by his hand. The same sun shone there

that illuminated the road where Jesus walked. Such air as the Saviour breathed, while praying in the gloomy garden, encircled us there; and breezes similar to those which fanned his sacred form, while it was bathed in sweat and blood, played lightly over us as we were worshipping at his throne. But what was more to us, a thousand times more than anything else, the Lord displayed his gracious power, and wrought some wonderful things among us, which touched the harps of heaven, and made the saints rejoice, and say, as Peter said to Jesus on the mountain, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," and as Jacob exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

There is a solemn pleasure in ruminating on the past; in calling up the usages of primitive days, when the saints lived in tents, and worshipped at altars built of stone, unchanged by art, within the shade of some hallowed grove. The native simplicity of the camp-meeting scene represented, in some degree, those days of antiquity. There we seemed to be carried away back into the society of the ancient patriarchs; and thought of Abraham, on the plains of Mamre, sitting in the door of his tent, receiving angelic visiters, and preparing refreshment for them there, under a branchy tree.

A similar course of plainness, meekness, and humility, the Saviour pursued in his mode of preaching, and manner of life. He taught the people in the desert—on the shores of the lakes, and looked down with abhorrence on the sinful pomp and glory of this world. The society of the rich and lordly Jesus did not court,

but retired from them, and abode with the meek and lowly, in their humble, peaceful retreats. The Saviour, in spirit, is still the same; his laws and government continue to be as they were; and his will and doctrines remain unchanged likewise.

According to my expectations, I fully realized that the life of a missionary was not a life of ease, affluence, or worldly honour. Together with temptations, and other mental conflicts, I was obliged to suffer fatigue of body, and many deprivations, while travelling in that new country. Some pleasant things, however, continually occurred along the road, which diverted my gloomy thoughts. Kind nature opened her botanical garden there in the wilderness, which regaled my eye with a variety of forms of vegetative life, from the creeping moss and humble shrub to the old giant oak, up to the towering pine, that nodded in the fleecy clouds, and laughed at the storm. Everything there was richly coloured, and dressed in artless drapery, inviting my attention—the salubrious and noxious; some designed for food, some for medicine, and some with properties still unknown.

So, as I rode onward, I could read the wisdom of God on the open leaves of nature's book, written by the hand of the wise Creator, while my poor beast was plunging through the mire along the narrow, winding roads. And, when I came out into the cultivated patches, I found the inhabitants poor, or without comfortable accommodations; still I had no reason to complain. Though the fare was often coarse, it was, nevertheless, more wholesome than the luxuries of sumptuous life. The log-cabins, which were only con-

structed for temporary dwellings, afforded no convenient apartments for study in the winter season; and, in the summer, I often resorted to the wilderness to read; but there I was greatly annoyed by the incessant hum of flies, and hungry moschetoes. Moreover, some of those cottages were very imperfect shelters—I could look from my bed, through the openings of the bark-covered roof, into the ample fields of celestial scenery, where the twinkling stars salute each other in their ethereal dance: and there I had the privilege to take lessons in astronomy gratis, from the open volume of the skies. Such nocturnal scenes and amusements were acceptable, in the summer months, when the atmosphere was pure; but not so pleasant and advantageous in the winter, when, through those openings, the nightly snow came down upon my face so uncourteously as to disturb my repose, and cover my bed completely.

Some of the older settlements possessed more wealth, and, consequently, the inhabitants in those places had provided more comfortable accommodations for themselves and their travelling friends. Lyons was one of those places: there the well-known Dorsey family resided; at whose hospitable mansion we found a peaceful, happy home, with every accommodation necessary to afford us rest, retirement, and consolation. We also found a good Methodist society in the neighbourhood, which made Lyons a kind of head quarters. Only a few poor houses were then on the ground where the flourishing village of Lyons now stands. We there, however, had a log-chapel consecrated to the service of God, which was an unusual accommodation in those days.

The circuit was large, but the societies were small, and the members, in general, extremely poor; therefore we had to trust Providence, and live on a scanty pittance. Still I did not suffer much for the want of the comforts of life—the most of my clothing I received from home. The little which I received from the circuit, I tried to stretch as near to a miracle as I possibly could. So the useful principles of economy are frequently learned by dire necessity. To know what our real wants are, and to provide for them only, would greatly lessen the expenses of living. But it is true that some members in the church, through sheer covetousness, oblige their ministers to undergo many temporal embarrassments to increase their own wealth. They have no faith to trust Providence for themselves; but they have so much confidence in the goodness of their ministers, that they are sure the Lord will take care of them—angels, perhaps, will feed them if they do not.

While going round, in the field of my labour, I came to an appointment in a pleasant settlement, where I found that a raging fever was spreading terror and death through the neighbourhood. The physician of the town, on whom the inhabitants depended for medical aid, was not exempted: at whose house I was called to preach a funeral discourse, on the decease of an inmate of the family, while he lay dangerously ill in an adjoining apartment. While I was visiting in the neighbourhood, endeavouring to administer consolation to the afflicted, I was seized with the same prevailing disease myself. After obtaining such medicine as I deemed necessary, I retired to a house on the margin

of the settlement, where I had often been, and where a benevolent, pious family resided: there I found real friends, and there I was at home.

Before I was taken with the fever I learned some facts, and made some discoveries, which convinced me that the mode of medical treatment in practice there was defective, though, probably, founded on ancient usages and popular theory. The practice, in my opinion, was not sufficiently philosophical to meet the various types, which the same diseases often assume, in different climates, and under various circumstances. The treatment, instead of assisting nature in her work to overcome the disease, seemed to give strength to the disease to overcome nature, in weakening the delicate machinery of the system, by employing too violent agents in the onset; which was like tearing a person's hand out of the teeth of a bear trap, violently, without first opening, carefully, the iron jaws. This theory seemed to prevail, that when a disease made its appearance, whether it was weak or strong, slow or swift, they must immediately bring out and set on their old medical *bull-dogs* and *blood-hounds*, to hunt the disease, run it down, and drag it out. But serious events often occurred in such combats; for while these potent agents were operating in the clay tabernacle to drive out and destroy the disease, they so marred its organs and life-springs that it became inanimate in their hands.

I knew that my case was dubious, and called for immediate attention: having no counsellors, in whom I could confide, I was driven to the necessity of bringing into exercise all my skill and philosophy, to devise a way to overcome my disease, which was then trotting

on quite lively. I firmly believed that nature would gain the victory, and triumph over her foe, if her road could be kept open without marring her strength. Hence, I concluded that a mild cathartic, together with some cooling drinks, and a severe course of regimen, were the only means necessary in my case:—indeed, I was resolved to do nothing more, live or die; excepting the intermixing of faith and prayer, which are always necessary, in all cases.

Accordingly I took the medicine which I had procured, and gave directions to the family concerning what I wished should be done. The pious lady, though willing to please me in everything, thought that the course I had prescribed for myself was too rigid and cruel. She imagined that, if I should continue the same mode of treatment, starvation would be the issue; and her excited fears painted, in frightful hues, the consequences of such an event. "What, a minister, a servant of God, die at my house for want of food!" She could not endure the thought, and appeared to be so sincere withal, that her solicitations were almost irresistible. Various substances she prepared, and urged my acceptance. But nature did not call for them, and her instinctive laws, in such cases, should direct and govern human reason. Moreover, the principles of philosophy taught me that to press alimentary substances into the stomach, under such circumstances, would not aid nature, but impede her operations; and like adding fuel to fire, would strengthen and increase the fever. Therefore I was resolved to pursue my own course, and trust divine Providence.

So I lingered on my couch, fasting, believing, hoping,

and praying, till, at length, the fever came to a crisis, or to speak figuratively, fainted in the conflict, being starved out; and hence it abandoned the assault, relinquished its hold, and crept away and died; or was transmuted, whence to rise to vigour again in another form. My system was left, after the departure of the foe, still under the control of kind nature, who kept her million agents and her million waiters continually at work, in putting everything in order, and in repairing the injured places. Hence, through nature's skill, and the blessing of Heaven, I was enabled, in a short time, to quit my couch; but I soon found that the restless virus, which had lost its control over my vital organs, was now settling down into my feet and ankles, which became greatly swollen, painful, and strangely discoloured with purple spots. In this condition, though very lame, I mounted my horse and moved on my way, rejoicing that my life was still saved to labour in the spiritual vineyard of my Saviour.

I distinctly saw that the government of God over this lower world, though perfect in every part, was not framed with a design to prevent physical evils, misfortunes, or temptations: but to induct us into the philosophy of their causes; to enable us to endure them with patience and resignation; so that, through divine economy, they might be all turned to our spiritual and eternal benefit. In the view of Heaven it was much better, and safer, for St. Paul to have special grace to endure his physical affliction, called "a thorn in the flesh," than to be delivered from it, and be without that special boon of grace. So every link in the chain of providential direction, as far as I could descry, appeared perfectly wise and consistent; those parts which lay

concealed from the reach of my investigation, I was compelled, by the force of reason and analogy, to believe were equally wise and perfect, as the parts which I could comprehend. So I was induced to believe that the whole system of the divine government here below, however encircled with clouds and darkness now, will appear wise and glorious when it shall be displayed in the purer light of eternity. Hence, I was enabled to trust the Rock of ages, the God of my salvation, and follow on by the clew of faith, not depending on the power of sense.

This year, being the first entirely devoted to the sacred ministry, was a year of experiment. This attempt, I thought, would settle every question and doubt respecting the course of my duty through life. And so the voluntary enterprise happily terminated. By care and prudent management my health was restored, even while I was travelling extensively, over rough roads, through storms, and heat, and cold, and preaching often, in close air, in small crowded houses. Moreover my faith and confidence were strengthened, and my soul animated to see the power and grace of God displayed in the salvation of sinners. Though the word was administered in weakness, the Almighty was pleased to attend it with a surprising sanction, whenever it was heard with an attentive ear, and received with a believing heart. Although toils and afflictions attended this year, I have numbered it among the happiest years of my life. In good health and in flowing spirits I left the circuit, with some important acquisitions of knowledge, derived from study, and from actual experience.

CHAPTER VI.

Welcome home—Itinerant system—Otsego circuit—The country—Inhabitants—Godliness and ungodliness—Piety in the church—Sectarian jealousies—Calvinism and Arminianism—Satyrical essay—Apology—Preacher's position—Ministering spirits—Strange event—Places of worship—Gospel and its effects—Cooperstown—Matrimony—Conference.

WHILE the annual conference was in session, (it being not necessary that ministers on probation should attend,) I seized the opportunity to enjoy a social pastime at my father's house; and to mingle once more in the circle of my old acquaintances, where I first was made to see the glory of the gospel, and feel the power of saving grace. However attracting the things of the world may appear abroad; whatever associations may gather around us in the field of new acquaintances; still the cultured instincts, which grow in the centre of the heart, will cling closely and ardently around the localities of home. Home is a dear, central spot, on a sickly, gloomy world. We find, by experience, that we have tender ties existing in us of such tone and tenacity that time does not relax, or distance sever. Mind, though thrown into a wide orbit, clings still to a chosen, central point of its own. This mental gravity, or adhesiveness of disposition, is an attribute of human nature, which we know is always matured and directed by habit and education, and is one of the principal sources of earthly happiness. The power of religion does not destroy these tender sensibilities, but, like a refiner's fire, it purifies and improves them.

Home, probably, had greater charms, and stronger attractions to me in consequence of my domestic habits. My father's occupation kept me necessarily confined at home; so, from habit, home constituted my terrestrial paradise. There, in that sequestered, romantic valley, where my dear parents resided, many endearing associations existed. There, on my return from the field of my labour, I was received, by my friends, with demonstrations of joy and kindness; though not exhibited in pompous harangues, with noisy crowds, but in the indescribable artless oratory of joy and affection, which flashes in the speaking eye,—sounds in the tones of the voice,—shows itself in the grasp of the hand,—glitters in the falling tear,—and tells in every gesture. The genius of affection will have nature's dialect, and nature's own oratory, through which to communicate her own living story. She hates cold, studied formalities; it is too slow for her vivacity, too cold for her ardent temperament, and too set and rigid for her lively off-hand movements. She will have liberty to weep, to laugh, and to act, as the spontaneous emotions rise in the excited soul, and demand ventilation.

While I was resting and regaling my spirits in the society of my old friends, the complicated business of conference was in progression; and the time was rolling on when the preachers would receive their appointments for the present year. At the same time I was ruminating on the probability whither I should be sent. I had some anxiety on the subject, still I desired to act, in submission, as a son in the gospel. As a servant of God and the church, I believed that I was safe

in confiding in the rule of Providence, and the agency of the church, to whom I had voluntarily surrendered myself.

The itinerant system I admired; I saw that it was happily adapted to meet the wants of the world, though attended with some hardships and inconveniences to the preachers. The plan, I discovered, had a high and sublime original: the divine Author of the gospel devised and established it himself. He constituted all the apostles missionaries, and directed them to go into all the world. Accordingly, they went everywhere and preached, the Lord working with them—so the poor had the gospel preached unto them. As the moral condition of the people was the same in all ages, an itinerant ministerial organization was still required to supply the wants of the world. In this way the gospel could be preached upon the mountains, in obscure villages; the ignorant could be instructed, the lost could be found, and the scattered flock of Christ, in the wilderness, could be fed with the bread of life.

I must confess that I was pleased with the constitution of the church in whose bosom I had been fostered, and in whose arms I wished to live and die. It appeared, to my understanding, to resemble, in many of its features, the ancient apostolical plan—the government and the economy of the church being so methodically constructed, their various parts so nicely combined, that they form only one great complicated system: every part operating by mutual force, and operating to diffuse the holy gospel, and to move the world aright; to which everything else is designed to be kept in due subordination. The General Confer-

ence, with its efficient episcopal chair, is the grand balance-wheel to the whole ecclesiastical organization. The whole body of the church is divided into annual conferences; these conferences are divided into districts, the districts into circuits, the circuits into classes; and all these different departments are filled and managed by appropriate officers, from the bishops down to the class-leaders. The local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders, all fill such important places as connectives, and helpers, that the whole system would be incomplete without them: all are useful parts of one complicated, consistent whole. No part stands alone; no operator is independent. But every order, every agent, and every member, holds a relative position on a confederated plan, individually contributing a proper share to increase the weight of general character, to accelerate the force of action, and to bring about the grand results. While on the wing of thought, I saw the great general circle, including all the conferences, round which the superintending bishops were moving; within that I saw the smaller district circles, round each of which a presiding elder was revolving officially; and within these district orbs I beheld the numerous circuits, round which the other itinerant ministers were moving. In the wide field of my view, everything appeared to be in methodical motion, exhibiting the appearance of "*a wheel in the middle of a wheel*;" while the watchful eyes of Jehovah's superintending agents were looking carefully on, observing every movement, and every glorious result.

The reader will discover that I was carried away, in my thoughts, to the shore of the river Chebar, where

the prophet Ezekiel saw, in a vision, the complicated government of God, and the mysterious plan of redemption and salvation; all inspired and moving by supernatural power. Indeed, I found myself suddenly involved in a maze of wonderful comparisons. I thought that I discovered a striking analogy between some parts of the prophet's vision and the new covenant missionary machinery, which was constructed by infinite Wisdom, and put in operation by Jesus Christ, when he opened the gospel dispensation, established his spiritual kingdom on earth, and sent his apostles forth to preach the gospel, flaming with the miraculous baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. Moreover, I thought that I discovered another striking analogy existing between the apostolical organization, and the present itinerant missionary plan, to send the gospel throughout the world. Here I saw the heralds of salvation moving onward round their respective circles of operation, all animated, all in harmonious action, moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit. And as they proclaimed the terrors of the Lord, and displayed the glorious acts of the eternal Logos, a fire was kindled by their holy ministrations, and reformations were spreading wherever they went.

However vague and visionary the foregoing train of thought may appear to others, the view afforded me a mental repast, connected as I was with the missionary cause. I had been revolving through the year on a large wheel in the new country, and I was expecting soon to enter on another orb of operation quite as extensive and laborious. Believing, as I did, that the itinerant plan was originated by the government of God, I was willing to be moved around by the super-

intendency of the church, as the Lord of all should direct. Yes, I then felt willing to be little and unknown, a mere pin, or spoke, in the periphery of the gospel wheel, if, by my humble service, I could glorify God, be instrumental in saving souls, and gain a place in heaven at last.

While I was thus musing, visiting, and resting, information arrived from conference, that I was appointed to travel Otsego circuit, which lay eastward from my father's house, and but a short distance thence. An assignment of a field of labour so near home was a great accommodation to me; and what made it still more agreeable, I had been over several parts of the circuit before, and had become acquainted with a number of pious friends in that region. Therefore, with a joyful heart, I mounted my beast and pursued my way thither.

I soon learned that my circuit was not a diminutive field of labour: it extended south some distance among the rugged hills along the Susquehannah River, and north, to the neighbourhood of Fort Plain, in the winding valley of the Mohawk, encircling a large extent of territory, abounding with delightful, romantic scenery. Hills and valleys appeared in endless succession, on every side, and, in this feature, the country resembled the land of Judea, the birth-place of our Saviour. Wherever the traveller directed his eye, he saw something, in the wild variety of nature, to attract his attention, to wake the slumbering thought, and fan the fire of poetry.

Otsego, the adopted name of the county, from which my circuit derived its title, is of Indian origin, which, in their wild tongue, signifies a place of rendezvous.

Near the outlet of the lake there is a small rock, called the "Otsego rock," at which place, according to tradition, the Indians were accustomed to meet for consultation. Hence that beautiful expanse of water is known by the name of Otsego Lake. It is about nine miles in length, and lies glittering in the rays of the sun, like a stupendous mirror, framed with hills, and embossed with rocks and evergreen foliage. At the southern end of the lake, nature has provided a convenient outlet, which, though a small stream, is the source of the famous Susquehannah River. And there, guarded on the east and west by evergreen hills, with the transparent glassy lake before it, Cooperstown appears in its pleasant and sequestered location.

The territory comprised in my circuit wore different aspects: some sections I perceived had just emerged from the solitude of the wilderness, while others, with weather-worn buildings, and old orchards, displayed an ancient appearance. Some of these settlements were formed while this country was under the control of the throne of England. These neighbourhoods, being frontier settlements, suffered extremely in the revolutionary struggle from the barbarity of their savage foes. The history of these hapless sufferers, in their defenceless condition, is still handed down, from father to son, with thrilling emotions—the Indian whoop, the scalping knife, the reeking tomahawk, screaming, fainting, and houses burning, all live again in the vivid descriptions of these awful tragedies.

Although the inhabitants, in this region, were principally from the eastern states, I found some large neighbourhoods chiefly composed of Dutch, the most

of whom could understand plain English—so I was not a barbarian to all of them. Besides, there existed in the great mass of community all the shades of human character common everywhere, together with the usual variety of religious sects found in other parts of the country. These sects, I discovered, were stiff and uncharitable toward each other, which spirit was evidently fostered by their education, principles, and forms of religion. Infidels of every common cast, and sinners of all sorts were found there too, which contributed to complete the general assemblage of character. It is just, however, to say, that the people generally were enterprising, and many of them intelligent and very hospitable. Indeed, I was pleased with the circuit, and happy in the society of these affectionate Christian brethren, many of whom appeared deeply pious.

Pure practical godliness, and a proud, carnal life, were in direct opposition to each other there, as in all other places. This doubtless is one reason why devout Christians have always been contemned, and opposed by the ungodly part of community. It is not the bodily presence of holy men and women that disgusts the enemies of truth; but it is their zeal for God, and a pious hatred to all wickedness, that is so offensive in their eyes. The form of religion, careless, impenitent worldlings can endure; while their consciences are slumbering under its sound, they dream that all is right, and all with them is well; but the life and power of religion disturb their carnal repose; such religion they will not bear; it destroys all their comfortable feelings. Reformations, therefore, are

everywhere attended with a spirit of animosity, which abounds in the hearts of the enemies of the cross of Christ.

The societies on the circuit were flourishing in the midst of opposition; zeal and diligence were leading traits in their character. They not only believed in the doctrine of holiness, but were seeking to obtain a knowledge of it by experience. Pride, superfluity, and needless self-indulgence, appeared sinful in their eyes—contrary to a life of piety. The preaching, by which they were brought into the kingdom of Christ, was not formal and lifeless, but close, alarming, pointed, and practical. This was the preaching they admired, which was often discovered in their animated countenances, and by the cheering sound of an occasional responsive *Amen.* So the Methodist preachers and people, by their zealous efforts to build up the church of Christ, lost the approbation of the irreligious world, together with the friendship of cold-hearted formalists; and, consequently, their distinguishing name became a proverb of reproach here, as it had been everywhere. It was well known, however, that while these ministers proclaimed a full and free salvation, wonderful effects were produced. Their success and influence, under so many disadvantageous circumstances, were mysteries which their enemies could not clearly solve. That happy changes were produced, in community, through their instrumentality, was an obvious fact to the world at large.

In the estimation of some of the reputed oracles of the land, these travelling ministers would misguide all under their influence, by proclaiming plausible, erro-

neous sentiments. Hence the name, Methodism, sounded in their theological ears quite rough and inharmonious. They seemed to know, with certainty, that Arminianism was blended with Methodism; and Arminianism was fraught with dangerous errors—free will, general atonement, &c. Judging from circumstances, they seemed to fear that if these errors should be allowed to spread and work among the moral elements, being so subtle and mischievous, they would soon loosen the old fixtures of long-established theology, and also break out the iron cogs from the wheel of fatality, in spite of pins and wedges.

The reader, doubtless, understands that the celebrated John Calvin, in forming his creed, placed in a prominent position, among other things, the doctrines of *predestination, limited atonement, particular election,* and *unconditional perseverance,* which tenets are known as the peculiar doctrines of *Calvinism. Arminius* combined, in his creed, the doctrines of the *liberty of the will, general redemption,* and *conditional perseverance,* in opposition to Calvin, which tenets are denominated *Arminianism.* A part of the Protestant sects have rallied around the Calvinistic standard, and part around the Arminian standard. So the Protestant world is divided into two general classes, and are known as Calvinists and Arminians. But each Protestant sect has some sentiments peculiarly its own. Nevertheless, if you oppose the leading points of Arminianism, you will offend all the Arminian churches. So, if you oppose the leading points of Calvinism, you will wound all the Calvinistic churches. It is apparent, therefore, that the theological nerves, in ecclesiastical bodies, are

very tender and irritable; even the point of a logical sentence will often produce painful paroxysms. To defend some peculiar, favourite tenets, in the estimation of some, is more honourable and of more consequence, than to maintain a holy, blameless reputation.

The leading spirits in the Calvinistic churches, throughout our wide circuit, watched attentively our movements with a jealous eye. Though personal enmity, I presume, was not often indulged; yet the power of sectarianism was so predominant, and local interests held such a commanding influence over them, that we were not only kept from their arms of brotherhood, but were strenuously opposed, and our Arminian tenets openly assailed. This high opposing stand, assumed by these older churches, made it necessary that the Methodist ministers should defend their articles of faith. Hence they were often led to exhibit fully, and distinctively, their own doctrines, with the Scriptural basis by which they were supported; and also, they took the liberty to show the erroneous features in the system of Calvinism. So, by agitating the polemical waters, truth and error were brought into notice, and the slumbering community aroused to investigate the sacred oracles to learn, for themselves, the true doctrines of the gospel of Christ.

Though but a green student, I was necessarily led to take an humble part, occasionally, in the disputations of the day. It was not expected, however, that a young inexperienced hand could wield such ponderous arguments as the older veterans, who had been trained in a polemical school. I knew that I was bound to defend the truth; and in zeal I was not deficient. So,

while in a poetical fever, I seized my dormant pen, and formed, in a plain style, a satirical essay, bearing this title, "The Dagon of Calvinism:"* the points of which were directed against *predestination, limited atonement, particular election,* and *unconditional perseverance,* the four leading points in the compass of Calvinism.

It is truly pleasing that the peculiar circumstances which called for such unvarnished retributions do not now exist. The stormy aspect of those days has long since passed away, and a spirit of Christian forbearance is permitted to reign. Yes, all the heavy cannon, on the ecclesiastical batteries, have been spiked, excepting a few signal guns, which are kept mounted, and occasionally discharged, to perpetuate by their noise the boundary lines between the churches.

The author sincerely hopes that no pious reader, of any sect, will be disturbed or offended by the introduction of the essay, in the Appendix to this narrative. The republication of it is not designed as a thrust at the Calvinistic churches, to arouse again the fiery spirit of controversy: but as old shields and helmets are preserved, in museums, to show to the rising generations the mode of ancient warfare; so this satirical poem is preserved, merely as a memorial, for the amusement of those who wish to look back on the doings of departed days.

The position which the gospel minister holds is very peculiar; he is made a spectacle to angels and to men. Being commissioned from God above, and authorized by the church below, he stands amenable to both: hence, a tremendous weight of responsibility

* See Appendix to this volume.

rests upon him. As an ambassador from the court of Heaven, he is bound to preach the everlasting gospel —the whole truth and nothing but the truth—to expose the fatal errors and vices of a guilty world; not fearing frowns, or regarding flatteries. But to warn every man, and to teach every man in all wisdom, is a great and arduous work, requiring gracious endowments, independence, and skill.

The minister's elevated station, as a public teacher, not only enables him to scan the characters and doings of others, but it also invites the criticising eye of community upon himself. His words, spirit, and manners, are canvassed closely; and if any minute obliquity is discovered in him, it is made a subject of animadversion. Similar acts, or words, in persons moving in other stations in life, would scarcely be noticed. Even the irreligious part of community look for practical holiness in a gospel minister; and the church, especially, has a right to expect it, and solemnly requires such spiritual fruit at his hands. Being called and endowed by the Holy Ghost, having a holy work to perform, he should be an example of holiness himself; his heart, lips, and hands, should be sanctified and preserved blameless.

The preacher, moreover, is watched by his companions in the ministry. Sometimes conflicting emotions will make their appearance, even where nothing but holy affections should reign—he stands not above envy or neglect. He may be overrated for certain attainments, and, hence, command too much personal admiration; or he may be neglected and sink, through envy, below his proper level; and thereby lose the

esteem which his talents and labours merit. Though he may be highly regarded by those who are converted through his instrumentality; still there are many in the ungodly class who will shun his presence because he is pious; and even hate him for the ardent, pointed reproofs which he administers. These foes to truth watch him with a jealous eye—they seek for evil, not for good; and are ready to believe all slanderous reports, besides industriously aiding in their circulation, as the psalmist sings, "For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart."

Besides all this, the minister is exposed to many mental conflicts and oppressive temptations. He labours, and sees little or no fruit springing from his repeated efforts. Everything at times appears dark and forbidding; weighty discouragements arise to meet him at every turn. The church sometimes forgets to inquire into his circumstances, which may be perplexing, and such neglect increases his burdensome care. At length he is tempted to leave the spiritual work, and engage in some secular calling, as some of the apostles did—but he recollects that they toiled all night and caught nothing. His first vows are upon him, which have been renewed from time to time, under which he has been acting, and warning sinners to repent. His hand is on the gospel plough; he, therefore, must not look back, or think of turning back. By the constitution of the divine government he has no right to leave the holy vocation to seek the riches and honours of the world.

The preacher, while he is suffering under privations

and trials, should always remember that his Master while on earth had not where to lay his head. As the gospel cost the great price of the life and blood of our suffering Lord, why then should not his servants, who are sent to publish his gospel, be willing to endure reproach, poverty, and trials here? Sufferings in a benevolent cause are attended with precious consequences; they instinctively inspire sympathy for the afflicted; which feeling should always abound in the preacher's ardent soul. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you," is to him a consoling promise in every gloomy hour. Knowing that his Master's Spirit is with him, he enjoys a consolation which the world cannot bestow, or dispossess him of, without his consent. He is also a brother and a companion to angels; these holy, bodiless beings, are appointed under the divine government as "*ministering spirits*," employed in the same field of operation, moving invisibly round, rejoicing with him over the victories of the *cross*. Glorious companions indeed! They attend him from place to place, to administer comfort to his troubled spirit by night and day, and to protect him till his work shall be accomplished.

The following extraordinary occurrence affords an example which goes to establish the doctrine contained in the preceding remarks.

According to arrangement, I had been preaching on a sabbath morning; and thence had to travel some distance to preach to another congregation in the afternoon. My mode of travelling was on horseback, (indeed, then all Methodist preachers travelled in the same manner: the roads around our circuits were too

new and rough for wheel conveyances.) I was soon prepared for my journey. But the horse and myself were almost strangers to each other; I had left my own beast and borrowed this one to supply his place for a few days. The friend who granted the favour informed me that the beast was young, and not under good subjection; withal, naturally wild and very furious. I had found no difficulty, however, in keeping him under control until the following incident occurred. The saddle which was on the horse I had used more than twelve months; being fixed for my own convenience, I doubt whether the stirrup buckles had been moved by any one, during the year. The buckles were without rollers; and, by remaining a long time stationary, had become deeply bedded in the leather straps. So I mounted the horse, and rode on my way in company with a social friend. Without apprehending any danger, as we were trotting along on the summit of a hill, by some cause unknown the horse bounded as in a fright, and commenced a swift gallop down the rough descent. In his first bound, the rein, on the left side, fell from my grasp, and in an effort to arrest his speed I suddenly brought him by the other rein from the centre of the road in an oblique direction toward the fence. Though very sprightly, the horse blundered, and fell violently upon his knees. The force downward I could not resist; and, in the fall, I turned involuntarily round; at the same instant my right foot fell out of the stirrup, and my left slipped through the stirrup iron as I fell with my back on the ground. The horse, instantaneously, bounded upon his feet; still, while he was rising, the stirrup leather

was unbuckled, and the strap drawn out from the saddle, leaving it hanging to the stirrup-iron which was round my ankle. Without a moment's pause, the terrified animal ran off furiously, leaving me in safety, reflecting on the mysterious providence which had rescued me from imminent danger. If the strap had not been unbuckled, and drawn out by an invisible hand, (it evidently was not unbuckled when I mounted, or it would have drawn out then,) I should have been dragged by the ankle over the rugged road, which doubtless would have terminated my labour on earth for ever. It may appear to some quite enthusiastical, still I have no doubt that an invisible agent, with the quickness of lightning, extricated me in a miraculous manner from my perilous situation, and so permitted me to go on and finish my work.

After awhile the horse was arrested, and brought back to the memorable spot, where I was still ruminating on my strange escape from impending destruction. The sudden fall upon my back gave a shock to my whole system, which was followed by a general debility. But being anxious to reach the place of my destination at the time appointed, with some assistance I mounted the horse again, and travelled on, wondering why such a poor obscure mortal should be so kindly noticed, and attended by providential goodness. The occurrence was a new lesson, in addition to former admonitions, to teach me to depend on the Almighty continually for life, health, reason, salvation, and every other blessing. The event laid me under new obligations to be true to my sacred trust, and labour more faithfully in my holy vocation.

After enduring much weariness, I arrived in safety at the place appointed, and there found the congregation waiting. With an unusual sense of my duty resting upon me, I arose and commenced the service; and then I endeavoured to preach as one returned from the dead, and sent to do an errand of mercy to a fallen people. That memorable day was a sanctified sabbath to me, which probably will be remembered in the celestial world, for there I expect to see the angel that unbuckled the stirrup and saved my life.

At that time there were no churches erected within the bounds of our extensive circuit. Indeed, there was only one Methodist church in all this western country, except a few temporary log buildings. Hence we were under the necessity of preaching in school-houses, private rooms, barns, or the wilderness. These humble places being the best accommodations the condition of the country could then afford, all appeared to be contented and even thankful for the privileges they enjoyed. Pure spiritual worship, which emanates from the pious heart, can be offered acceptably in any place; and wherever Christ meets his worshipping saints, there is peace, paradise, and heaven. What is earthly splendour?—nothing! But to seek for and obtain heavenly *glory*, *honour*, *immortality*, *eternal life*, is everything—the essence and sublimity of all perfection.

In some places where we were called to labour, the gospel was a great rarity; the people appeared to view it as it is—a message from God: they evidently were not gospel hardened. It was pleasing and wonderful to see what toils and difficulties some would go through to get to a place of worship; even women

would frequently travel miles on foot over rough roads to hear a sermon. The object which brought them there was to gain instruction; hence they listened attentively to catch every word that fell from the preacher's lips; so hungry were they for the word of life. To preach to them was a pleasure indeed. The word had ready access to their hearts, for they heard for themselves and not for others. The anxious gaze, the sigh, the falling tear, told the deep emotions of their hearts while they were sitting under the sound of the gospel. It was always deemed a favourable omen to see the convictions of penitents deep and pungent; their consciences responding to the thunder of the holy law, causing them to tremble and cry out, "I am a great sinner—O Lord, have mercy on me." As their agony under the pressure of the divine law was extremely great, so their conversions, as a natural consequence, were sudden, powerful, and glorious. Their animated countenances answered immediately to their happy feelings, in the transit from darkness to light, while their joyful lips borrowed the angelic song, "Glory to God in the highest," which responded to the rapturous emotions in their converted souls. Emerging so suddenly from spiritual death to spiritual life, it was not surprising, that in their transports they should manifest, in words or actions, something which would appear rather extravagant and enthusiastic to the understanding of a carnal-hearted observer. But to behold these enraptured converts trying to express their feelings was not so surprising a sight as the impenitency and thoughtlessness of sinners, scoffing at piety, and rejecting the great salvation.

Cooperstown, though a small village then, was in consequence of its location an important centre for business. Some churches had gained an early establishment there; but for particular reasons the hierarchy were not very friendly to our Methodistical operations. In villages we were viewed as intruders—highways, hedges, and forests, were our proper places. But, being authorized to preach the gospel to every creature, we had the boldness to make our humble entry into the village also, where we obtained a room for preaching in a private house, occupied by Dr. Crain, who was a member of our communion, generally known there as a pious man, and intelligent without ostentation. Our introductory efforts were crowned with favourable omens; a respectable number of villagers attended our ministry, who appeared very solicitous to learn the peculiar doctrines of this new sect, which was everywhere spoken against. We soon discovered that our labour was not in vain. A small society we formed there, which laid the foundation and opened the way for succeeding operations, and future prosperity.

Matrimony is a common occurrence in human life, having in itself nothing peculiarly interesting; still the reader will doubtless expect some account of the author's action in the matter. While travelling around this department of Zion, the writer renewed an acquaintance with Miss C. G. Carlton, of New-Lisbon, who, according to her own history, was awakened to feel the need of salvation when only fourteen years of age, under the preaching of Rev. Samuel Budd; soon afterward she obtained mercy through faith in

Christ, and united with the Methodist E. Church, in whose communion she held a membership when he formed an acquaintance with her. After revolving the momentous subject over and over, weighing the advantages and disadvantages attending a married life, he came to the conclusion to change his condition; congratulating himself that if matches were made in heaven, and though, in coming down, some unfortunately "lose their fellows on the road," as Dr. Watts sung, he was not one of those unlucky beings. He had good reasons to believe that the subject of his choice was the one designed by Providence to share with him the joys and sorrows along the maze of life. He, moreover, had cause to expect from her native talents, gifts of grace, and ready tact in business, that she would be a useful auxiliary in the ministerial calling. Indeed, to his understanding, many things connected with the contemplated engagement augured favourably, and gave to the design the character and cast of an obvious duty. So after due deliberation, counsel, and prayer, with auspicious prospects before him, he entered into the matrimonial alliance, believing that the step would place him in a condition where he could be more useful in his sacred calling.

The connubial state is a matter of vast importance, necessarily accompanied with weighty consequences through life. Therefore it should be entered into deliberately, and with laudable motives, founded on moral rectitude. Verily in this, and in every act of a man's life, the glory of God should be the ruling consideration. But after all, in the reversions and changes to which this mortal state is subject, a man may be

influenced by some trying events to join with Solomon in saying, "That the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

I soon perceived that busy time had borne me rapidly along while engaged in my sacred employment. The gloomy winter had passed away, and the spring, which had succeeded, apprised me that my labours in that region would soon come to a termination. April 2, 1807, was approaching, at which time, according to prior arrangements, the conference would commence its session in Philadelphia. That venerable body of ministers I was anxious to see. But the unpleasant condition of the roads through the wilderness at all seasons, and especially in the spring, added to the distance, made the journey appear gloomy and forbidding—we could not fly by steam then, as travellers do now. After some hesitation, I finally concluded that it was my duty to relinquish the contemplated journey. So I remained on the circuit awhile, then went home to visit my parents, in the pleasant valley where I first found the *river of life*. There I saw many with whom I was formerly associated, and also beheld once more the old *elm* tree under whose shadow the Lord called me to preach his gospel.

CHAPTER VII.

Westmoreland—Ebenezer White—Resignation to events—Methodist church—Utica—High calling—Thoughts on "What is man?"—Rich and poor—Daniel Sealy—Errors in judgment—Conference—Ordination service—Thoughts on apostolical succession.

Soon after the adjournment of conference, intelligence came that I was appointed to travel Westmoreland circuit, in company with Rev. Ebenezer White, on whose superior wisdom and experience devolved the administration of discipline. He was in every particular such an associate in the ministry as I needed —young in years, and immature in the ministerial profession, I needed a father for a counsellor, a friend to administer comfort, and a worthy example for imitation. These endearing attributes I soon learned were happily concentrated in his character. He was deeply pious, courteous, and amiable; admired true Christian simplicity, but abhorred pride, and all its contemptible appendages. I shall have cause to give a more particular account of this holy man hereafter, in this narrative.

I came into this field of labour with a joyful heart, accompanied with an ardent desire to do something toward accomplishing the end of my holy calling. The societies were small, located remotely from each other over a wide territory. Though benevolently disposed, the people were generally indigent, or in moderate circumstances. The newness of the country unavoidably subjected its inhabitants to endure many inconveniences; and, as a natural consequence, their ministers

were obliged to share inconveniences with them. I was perfectly resigned to my condition, and thankful that nature had endowed me with a measure of fortitude, and withal, a physical constitution well fitted for endurance. I expected to undergo hardships when I engaged in the spiritual warfare. Ease, wealth, and earthly glory, formed no part of the conditions in the covenant by which I was bound to God. Hence I was not in the least disappointed.

We had only one church in our spacious circuit, which was erected in the year 1801, on the Sauquoit Creek—a small wooden building with a gallery. At that day a Methodist church was a strange thing—a wonder in the land. The society there was established in an early day; and had spread and grown in numbers and influence, till at length Sauquoit became a place of notoriety among the members of our communion. There some early disciples of the Wesley school were happily located, where, through their zeal and faithfulness, they stood firmly, and overcame the opposition which was arrayed against them. From that central place the "*Boanerges*" of former times sounded out the word of the Lord; and many heard the joyful tidings, and turned from sin to the service of God.

Utica, though now an important city, occupying a commanding position in the state, the mart for the rich surrounding country, holding a distinguished rank among the incorporated cities in Western New-York, was at that time only a small village. Its advantageous location, however, made it, even then, a place of notoriety and business. Some of the leading Christian sects in the country, which came in at an early period,

had gained an influential standing there, and consequently held control over the public mind. Whatever prejudices they had received through the moulding influence of early education, by the law of mental adhesiveness, still remained with them. Believing themselves correctly indoctrinated, and being supplied with competent teachers, they naturally thought that it was unnecessary for travelling prophets to trouble themselves to come there to teach doctrines, which, in the estimation of some, were wild and heterodoxical.

If we understood our calling, as ambassadors of Christ, we were commissioned to go everywhere and preach the gospel to every creature. So, in our travels, we visited Utica also, where we found a few disciples, who received us kindly, as brethren. And there, in a retired street, a school-house was procured for a preaching place, which we occupied occasionally. But the attempt at first appeared discouraging; the place was obscure and humble, the congregation small, and we were strangers without much renown. We knew, however, that the first act, in any undertaking, tells but little for the whole design: we therefore continued our efforts. At one time I came there to preach, according to a previous appointment, and found a large pile of fuel bark arranged across the further end of the room—somebody did it, and it was done for some purpose unknown to me. I kept the ground, nevertheless; and a congregation soon came in; the pile of bark we used for a gallery, which was appropriated to the boys, who seemed pleased with their situation, and sat quietly. The audience appeared serious and thoughtful while I delivered to them a

solemn message from God. Though the saying may seem strange to some, that humble place was verily the house of God, and the gate of heaven to my soul. Our feeble labours there received the sanction of Heaven; and a pious society was formed, a part of whom have since gone to Abraham's bosom, where I hope to meet them again.

To travel laboriously, to endure privations and scorn, to preach to the poor, and be a servant to all, is, in the opinion of graceless worldlings, a despicable calling, who look on the present results, apart from the glorious consequences to be derived in the future world. All are free to acknowledge that the minister of state has an honourable office, and a weighty charge. But all state affairs are merely earthly, bounded to the narrow circle of this momentary existence. The ambassador of Christ has a higher office, and a more momentous charge. He is commissioned from Jehovah's court to this rebellious world; his message relates to deathless spirits—to the coming destiny of immortal beings, which necessarily is fraught with tremendous consequences. Strange, indeed, that such a messenger, charged with the affairs of heaven and salvation, should be scornfully treated, and his message contemptuously rejected. The deed is a great wonder in the moral world—an abhorrent spectacle in the view of God and his holy angels. Alas! what dread horror and disappointment the awful judgment day will bring upon the sinful world! Then the lost will see in the light of flaming justice what they have done, and what they have lost by their folly, in rejecting the truth!

How just the exclamation, "What is man, that Thou

art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" He is only a tenant on earth. In bulk, and physical strength, he is inferior to many in the animal kingdom. But his immortal soul, endowed with reasoning powers, gives him his high rank, and all his superiority over the brute creation. And his residence here imparts to this dull planet all its importance and interest. See the vaulted heaven—how thickly hung with glowing orbs! There sight is lost in that vast field of wonders, and thought is overpowered with amazement. How grand, diversified, and stupendous is the universe of God! Worlds beyond worlds, in countless numbers, with magnitudes unknown, rush upon the astonished gaze! Still but a small part of the whole luminous territory is seen, which lies spread out in all directions. Look, wondering gazer, into the dazzling, starry vault above; then look down upon thyself, a poor particle of animated clay! Suddenly, with strange, mingled emotions, you will be influenced to cry out, What is man, that thou, the God of the universe, art mindful of him? And what is this world on which he dwells, but a rolling mote in the universe, hanging, in open space, on the finger of God!

The earth is only a small appendage to the vast structure of the universe; nevertheless, it is a distinguished orb, freighted with immortal wealth, which lies partly immured in clay and rubbish. The hills, mountains, valleys, shores, and islands, all abound in precious *pearls*, *diamonds* of exquisite water, *gems* and *brilliants* in every variety, which, through sacrifice and toil, are sought, obtained, and prepared, for transport-

ation, to build and adorn the celestial city above. Hence this world, on account of the treasure it contains, has become a place of great notoriety in heaven; whither these costly productions, by a regular process, are continually arriving. To accomplish this noble enterprise, the King of heaven opened in due time a thoroughfare, a great highway, from his imperial palace down to these *diamond-mines*. But the labour to complete the undertaking was immense; and in the execution of the grand design his beloved Son, the Prince of heaven, lost his life—but found it again where he lost it, three days afterward. On this highway the chariots of salvation are rolling and flying continually, bearing these costly *gems* and *brilliants*, which have been dug from the pits and miry clay below; and as the chariots wheel into the gates of the celestial city, the attendant angels raise a triumphant shout.

On account of the richness, and inexhaustible state of these *diamond-mines*, the King has kept thousands of workmen employed, from age to age, digging in the mountains and caverns, and tracing the ravines, to obtain these precious *pearls*. The labour is necessarily attended with weariness and difficulty; but the workmen have great rewards in prospect. The King, who owns the *mines*, is immensely rich, and he has promised to give to each workman, who will labour faithfully, an immortal crown; besides, for every *pearl* obtained through his instrumentality, he will have a star added to his crown, to blaze there for ever. Hence it is a common occurrence that whenever a *gem* is found the labourers rejoice greatly over it; while the attending angels, after seeing the shining wonder, fly

home to heaven to spread the joyful tidings, "that the dead is alive, and the lost is found."

This *diamond-digging* business I thought was glorious work, a reality indeed. And I was happy in knowing that my poor self was among these blessed workmen, searching for lost souls in the mountains, forests, and dens of the earth. Though not so skilful as some, still I was resolved to win as many souls as I could, knowing that the salvation of one soul was a more important acquisition than the subjugation of a province, or gaining an earthly crown, or gathering millions of gold. All these earthly things, however highly esteemed by mortals here, are doomed to pass away with the roll of years. But an immortal soul, restored to the image of God, possesses worth and durability; a living branch of immortality, designed to be transplanted into the paradise above.

It seems to require more labour to bring some sinners to repentance than others. Some are encumbered and buried more deeply in the world than their neighbours; hence to arouse them, and bring them up into light and liberty, is a difficult task. For this obvious reason piety is rarely found among the opulent and gay classes of society. The true worshippers of the holy God arise, as in primitive days, from the middle and lower classes. The poor are generally the first to come to Christ: they have fewer attractions to the world; and being less encumbered with pompous things, and more willing to be taught, they are the first to come and pay honours to the King of heaven. Rich worldlings have their good things on earth, and while their carnal hearts are absorbed in care, luxury, and

pleasure, they look on religion as something too low for them—too serious and sacred to suit their gay, earthly temperament. Their minds being taken up with worldly things, they consequently have no time to devote to the study or practice of godliness. Wealth is their god, and the world their paradise, where they desire to stay for ever. They would gladly let the poor possess the whole of heaven above, if they could have their home and immortality here on earth.

To be rich is a common desire among mankind, while poverty is universally dreaded. The notion seems to prevail that happiness always dwells with affluence, and misery with poverty. But this conclusion is formed merely from exterior appearances, and not from truth and philosophy. Great wealth brings burdensome care; and, moreover, places a man in imminent danger: powerful temptations surround his envied position. As a natural consequence, his soul's salvation is neglected, and his moral character sacrificed on Mammon's sordid altar. While other men are renowned for wisdom, benevolence, or learning, he is simply called rich—a rich man. This is all the honour he gains; indeed, this is all the distinction his sordid soul desires. And in the midst of his toil and care he dies—dies rich; but leaves all his riches behind him. O! where is his soul? One rich man lifted up his eyes in hell; and we have reason to fear that he is not alone: for Christ said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." So here I will leave the rich worldlings, and pass on, as time will not wait for me.

One of our sabbath appointments was in Westmoreland, where a respectable society was early formed; men of age, experience, and influence, were imbodied in it. Daniel Sealy, an old disciple, was among the number who came out boldly in defence of the truth at an early day. This venerable disciple occupied a local preacher's sphere, and was a willing servant to the church. But he was independent in his mode of operating; he copied nobody's manner. He preached the truth in his own peculiar way, and that made his preaching acceptable to some, because it appeared more sincere and honest. It was all spontaneous simplicity, without any tinselling of art. Any preparation for the pulpit, except reading the Scriptures and praying, in his estimation, was unnecessary. Studied, formal work, did not satisfy him. He wanted every preacher to be a son of thunder, endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost; and every sermon to be plain and practical, interwoven with evangelical lightning. He was a godly man, esteemed the church, and was bountiful in donations to aid the ministry.

In regular turn, on a sabbath morning, I came to the before-mentioned place to preach; and at the time appointed I commenced the service as usual. The first ceremonies being performed, and the congregation quietly seated, I arose and pronounced my text. Immediately the before-mentioned brother Sealy cried out from the further part of the assembly, saying, "That text was preached from two weeks ago, by brother White." The notice implied a request, that I should take some other passage. Though the interruption was altogether unexpected, it fortunately did not dis-

compose or perplex my mind in the least. With perfect self-possession, as if nothing had happened, I stood with my pocket Bible open in my hand, (every Methodist preacher in those days carried a small Bible with him,) turning leaf after leaf, with my eye on the book, while my thoughts were galloping over the wide field of inspired truth. Probably one or two minutes passed in this way, while the congregation remained in doubtful suspense, except brother Sealy, who sat silently praying with all his might for divine inspiration to help the preacher. He doubtless felt some fear that he had blundered into an error, in speaking out so abruptly to a young, green student in divinity. But the deed was done, and could not be undone. To pray and trust in God was his only alternative. As I stood in a state of thoughtfulness, these words, like a flash of light, came into my mind, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Without consuming time to turn to the chapter, I immediately pronounced the words with joyful emphasis on the ears of the audience. The painful suspense was instantly broken; hope seemed to sparkle in every countenance. Without dismay or confusion, being assisted perhaps by brother Sealy's prayers, I went on with the introduction; and the subject opened delightfully to my view: thought and language were at hand; heaven and earth seemed to be in the same neighbourhood. I had a variety of good feelings; indeed, good feelings that day became common property. There was evidently a great excitement in the assembly: some were unusually transported. Brother Sealy was in his element: being overwhelmed with blessedness, he gave us loud evi-

dence that he was present. This extraordinary manifestation of the divine Spirit, following the unusual events of the day, confirmed brother Sealy more than ever in his opinion, that studied preparations for the pulpit were unnecessary. Though he had been converted a long time before, and had received great blessings from God; still, according to his own account, he was never before so filled with grace, glory, and divine love. To distinguish that gracious bestowment, when speaking of it afterward in love-feast, he called it "a new conversion."

After this faithful disciple had finished his course, he left the society and church on earth, and went up to join the saints above; where I hope to meet him, and all my dear friends.

Common observation shows that the human mind is naturally prone to run off into extremes when pursuing a favourite topic; even intelligent, pious men are not above such frailities. Some are inclined to believe that the preacher must depend wholly on immediate impressions; and that inspired impulses will always direct him without study, or the action of his own mind: while others seem to have no confidence in God, that he will assist them, though he has promised to do so; hence they depend entirely on their own endowments, learning, and exertions, to accomplish the great end of their high calling. But in the wisdom and economy of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, learning and mental exertion are necessary, together with the high endowments of grace, to enable a man to preach the gospel successfully.

It sometimes happens that young preachers, who

have acquired a little learning while attending an academical school, which at first tends to inflate and intoxicate the mind, fall into the error that to use many high-sounding, showy words, is the sure road to oratorical fame, thinking that great words must make a great sermon; instead of plain language, filled with great thoughts.

I was well acquainted with a young preacher who had left the academical halls but a few weeks before we met each other in the house of worship. A social meeting was in progress, when this young preacher arose, on the floor, before the assembly, to give an exhortation. He brought forth the truth with awful earnestness, to alarm the ungodly who were on the road to ruin: still he discovered no uncommon move in the congregation; when, to accomplish his end, he started suddenly back, showing a fearful countenance, looked down, and pointing with his hand toward the floor, as if he saw a trap door opened leading to the pit of wo; and, at the same time, with a swelling voice cried out, saying, "Sinner, if you don't repent you will be precipitated down the lubricated steep of the opake profundity of damnation!"

There was some excitement in the assembly, as might be expected, from such a display of words—perhaps some thought that, in his zeal, he had run off into an unknown tongue. But I happened to know that he had lately returned from a high school, and was highly affected with the power of learning; therefore he took that opportunity to show his attainments in rhetoric, and, at the same time, to electrify the assembly. He doubtless made the declaration with a

pious intention, hoping that such chain-shot would alarm the sinner, and accomplish much good. So mistakes often occur in this world of error.

Our annual conference assembled again, March 20th, 1808, in Philadelphia; at which time I was elected to the order of deacon. But not being present, my ordination was necessarily deferred till the sitting of the New-York Conference, which was appointed to meet at Amenia, in the following April; where, according to previous arrangement, I appeared to receive sacred orders. Being the first ecclesiastical assembly I ever attended, it opened a new chapter in my experience. Indeed, it was an interesting school to me. There I saw many venerable servants of God and the church, who were endowed with wisdom and advanced in experience; and others, in youth and greenness, on their way to eminence. It was delightful to see so large a body of pious, intelligent men, assembled together, the representatives of the church, and the lights of the world, engaged in weighty business, examining characters, deliberating on questions, and arranging matters for the coming year.

Among the many devotional acts which took place on that occasion, no one was so moving and solemn to me as the ordination service. We stood before the altar, under the eye of God, and in the presence of the congregation; and there responded to the weighty questions proposed by the bishop: yes, bound ourselves under solemn obligations to perform the duties connected with the holy office. Then the venerable Bishop Asbury laid his holy hands, severally, on our heads, and pronounced, in his singularly impressive

manner, the following words: "Take thou authority to execute the office of a deacon in the church of God; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Then with our hands, severally, on the Holy Bible, the charge continued, "Take thou authority to read the Holy Scriptures in the church of God, and to preach the same." The solemn words in the form, together with the mellow, bass tones of the voice that pronounced them, accompanied, too, with a grave, sanctimonious manner, added great solemnity to the ceremony. It seemed to me that no other mortal could perform the ordination ceremony so impressively, and with so much majesty.

I was affected with a deep sense of my sacred, momentous duty, while at the altar of consecration: the solemn obligations I was taking upon myself revealed the character of my future responsibility. I was under vows before; but now my vows were renewed publicly and officially. At the same time, I knew that *ordination* added no gift or faculty to the soul, nor conferred any intrinsic worth to moral character—it being only an outward, visible ceremony, instituted for a distinguishing mark by which ministers of the gospel were to be known to the church and to the world, their authority appearing on the face of their credentials, by which they pass among strangers in their proper rank, and become recognised by the civil law in Christian communities.

For several years, preceding my ordination, I had been preaching under divine authority, with only a license from the church, and God owned my labours then as evidently as he has done since. Though

young and weak, still the gracious Redeemer gave me many seals to my ministry before the hands of the bishop were laid upon me. My high authority to preach the gospel I had received long before, in a direct line from the throne above, by the call and inspiration of the Holy Ghost while under the elm-tree.* The sacred credentials which I there received, written by the finger of God on the tablet of my heart, accompanied from time to time with his approval and blessing on my feeble labours, were sufficient to confirm me in the fact, that I was in the "*true succession.*"

Without a call directly from Heaven, all the authority which the church can bestow on any man, by the ceremonial hands of her prelates, is useless and void in the sight of God. Verily, a graceless man, whom God has not called, though regularly ordained by the authority of the church, is not in the true apostolical succession; he is wanting in the first and most essential qualifications for the holy office. The apostles were first called by Christ himself, then ordained and set apart for the work of the ministry. The first link, in the chain of divine succession, lies in the *calling* by the Holy Ghost; after this, the ceremony of human ordination sets the minister apart, visibly, and formally in the church. So every branch of the spiritual general church is invested with proper authority, by the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, to confer holy orders on their ministers. And all who are thus ordained, being first called, and endowed by the Holy Spirit for the sacred work, are in the regular, apostolical succession.

* See chapter iv of this work.

The thought is shocking, delusive, and fanatical, that the imposition of human hands can endow, and qualify a man, with a *graceless*, *unconverted* heart, to preach the everlasting gospel—to arouse a blind, sinful world, and to dispense the holy ordinances. All such ordinations amount to a showy nothing—an act of solemn mockery in the sight of a holy God, who requires holiness in the inward part. And all such ministers, after they have received orders and authority from the church, are no better than the worldly pharisaical teachers in ancient days—blind leaders of the blind, with the pit of destruction before them.

CHAPTER VIII.

Returned—Strange movement—New-Hartford—Infidelity in high places—The Irish preacher—An infidel converted—Mr. Ballou's visit—Progress of truth—Location.

ACCORDING to my request, the conference consented to let me remain on the same circuit another year, in company with my old colleague. We were not only acquainted with each other, but we had gained knowledge of the moral condition of the people generally, and the pressing wants of the church. So we understood our work, and were ready to move on in our operations harmoniously, that we might accomplish the glorious end of our sacred calling.

On a sabbath morning I went to preach in a neighbourhood where we had bestowed much ministerial labour. A respectable society had gained a standing there, and some among the number seemed deeply pious. The inhabitants, generally, manifested respect for sacred things by their regular attendance on our ministry, and by their decorous behaviour in the place of worship. Still it seemed that a moral winter pervaded the neighbourhood: no religious excitement had been among them for a long time. The people came to hear the preaching, and went away from time to time, apparently unmoved. I became distressed in soul for the people there, and prayed, on my way to the place, that something might be done to affect their hearts, and change the morbid state of feeling which predominated among them.

When I arrived at the place, I found, as usual, a respectable congregation assembled in a barn. Burdened with uncommon solicitude, I went in, and took the stand. But my thoughts and feelings were hidden from the view of the assembly; nor did I care at that time what judgment they would form respecting my manner of proceeding, if, by any means, I could be instrumental in effecting a reformation among them. While I submitted myself to God to be acted upon by his Spirit, I was unexpectedly directed by a sudden impulse to depart from our ordinary mode in conducting the exercises. I well knew that the movement would appear wild, and be reprobated by some as an eccentric measure. Nevertheless, I arose, and commenced the exercises with an ardent exhortation, and continued it about fifteen minutes; then I said to the audience, Let us pray. After the close of that act, I arose and resumed my pressing strain, not stopping to sing, or to pronounce a text. While displaying the love of Christ, sounding the terrors of the Lord, and vibrating the fiery law over their slumbering consciences, I saw evident symptoms of animation. No drowsiness or inattention was discoverable. Some gazed with wonder; many told their feelings by a flow of tears; while others, under devotional emotions, responded to the truth by uttering a hearty "*Amen.*"

After continuing the exercises, in this unusual manner, as long as I deemed proper, I pronounced the benediction, and left them abruptly, without speaking to the class, according to our custom; and, with as little delay as possible, I mounted my horse and rode on to my next appointment. Soon after my departure

the leading members in the society opened their social meeting, which was attended with unusual order and devotedness. And, the consequence was, a glorious revival of religion commenced on that day, which spread through the settlement.

When ordinary means prove ineffectual, it may be proper, sometimes, to adopt extraordinary measures to accomplish the desirable end. Many, while in the frequent observance of the formalities accompanying true religion, confine their thoughts wholly to the ceremonies, instead of looking through them up to the Source of all blessedness. Hence their religion is nothing but dry, cold formality; like the honeycomb without the honey. Living thus without the spirit and power of religion, they become so crusted over that nothing less than extraordinary measures, attended by divine power, will bring them to feel deeply, and to enjoy the grace and power of godliness. They are like the Laodiceans, who imagined that they were spiritually rich, and had need of nothing; and knew not that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. We have reason to fear that more than one half, in the Christian churches, are in this lifeless condition. Reader, where art thou?

At this time I occupied a tenament near the precincts of New-Hartford village, where a few pious friends, living in the neighbourhood, occasionally met for devotional exercises. Some thoughtless youth from the village came also; and several by that means were brought from sin and darkness to the favour of God. But they united with the Presbyterian Church—at that time there was no other Christian society in the vil-

lage, and that was in a cold, formal state. Hence the influence exerted on community through their operations was quite limited and superficial. Universalism was spreading, and had gained the influence of some, while others adhered tenaciously to open infidelity, which had grown up with the early settlement. Unfortunately, their much-esteemed physicians were among the number who were early drawn into the delusive error, that the Bible is not the right rule of faith and practice, but poor blind reason must be man's only guide.

As far as my knowledge extended, it was a lamentable fact, that the physicians, at that day, were generally skeptical. They probably derived their antichristian notions from popular authors while passing through their anatomical and medical studies. Unquestionably, Dr. Darwin's works contributed much to poison the fountain of thought; and so misguided many while in the credulous, unguarded days of youth. Novel theories, however rotten at the core, frequently cast a captivating charm over the minds of unsettled, aspiring young men. And no calling probably places before the student so many and so strong allurements to lead him to infidelity as the study of medicine. Hence it was not surprising that, in those days, the medical schools were filled with skeptical heads, and graceless hearts; into whose hands were destined to fall the weighty concerns of a sickly, dying world. A physician, who has the charge of our dearest friends on earth, should be a Christian, a praying man, confiding in the power and grace of the Almighty, who deposited the healing properties in the mine-

ral and vegetable kingdoms for the use and benefit of man.

About this time a Methodist preacher came over from Ireland, and took up his residence in Utica. By his popular preaching talents he soon gained influence and favour among the people. In manner he was unaffected and pleasing; he illustrated the Scriptures clearly and strikingly; and pressed the truth on the hearts of his hearers pointedly and pathetically. As he was moved himself, so he moved others. Many who had been accustomed to hear dry, cold sermons, read over without any emotion from sabbath to sabbath, were captivated with his glowing, extemporaneous performances. Churches were opened for him in the villages, and multitudes flocked to hear him preach; and there, with others, the infidels came, and heard the gospel as they never heard it before. Through such nervous, evangelical preaching, Dr. Hull was brought to see that his deistical foundation was like a bank of sand. He, therefore, renounced those cheerless errors, and embraced the Christian religion; obtained the grace of adoption through faith in Christ, and openly proclaimed it to the world. But, for some reasons, he refused to connect himself with any church; which operated against his prosperity in religion. For any one to attempt to live a Christian life without attending to the gracious ordinances of God's house is an unwarrantable undertaking. A Christian must confess Christ everywhere, and in everything.

Dr. Hull was an eminent physician and surgeon, besides a very companionable man. He made frequent calls at my house, and I was much delighted with his

society. One day, at his special request, I took a seat in his carriage, and rode around with him among his patients—his main object was to have an opportunity to converse freely with me on the subject of religion. He then voluntarily acknowledged, that he had learned the corrupting tendency of infidelity by experience; his heart had been hardened, and his mind blinded, by that species of vain philosophy. But he rejoiced much that he was delivered from its influence; and had found the way into the kingdom of grace, where he desired to live and glorify God. With joyful emotions he remarked, "that his bosom companion (who was a believer likewise) had come to the conclusion, through Mrs. Giles's influence, to perform sacred duties, in the family, when he was absent." "The most she dreaded," he observed, "was to pray in the presence of the students who were not pious." So through grace she surmounted every difficulty, and kept the fire of devotion burning on the family altar—though in direct opposition to the belief and practice of the church in which she held a membership. However, I heard nothing said against her new pious practice. She moved independently in her circle; and, hence, was not easily turned from the path of duty.

While I resided in New-Hartford, Mr. Hosea Ballou came up from the east, and stopped awhile in the neighbourhood, where the advocates of Universalism had gained some proselytes. As he was visiting his brethren there, he happened to hear my name pronounced; and, on inquiry, learned that I was a son of Thomas Giles, who formerly resided in Connecticut, where he had occasionally preached in the days of my boyhood. I

did not know that the reverend gentleman was in the neighbourhood, till he, and one of his friends, came to visit me. Rev. Peter Vanest, the presiding elder, was then sick at my house; and his physician, the beforementioned Dr. Hull, was there, when these visiters came in. After the ordinary salutations were passed, and all quietly seated, Mr. Ballou, as a matter of course, began to inquire concerning my father's place of residence and welfare; and then the conversation turned back to years elapsed, when he preached at my father's residence, in Connecticut. So, in our colloquy, we occupied the whole time, while the rest of the company quietly submitted to be only hearers. As we passed on from event to event, the conversation ran freely and pleasantly, till, without any apparent design, his *Universalism* and my *Methodism* were drawn out so far, that they became crossed and entangled. Immediately we found ourselves involved in a defence of our different principles. It so happened that I was not alarmed at the onset; but kept my position, and defended my doctrines as well as I could. For a youth, however, to engage in a controversy with the famed *Goliath* of Universalism, the odds were truly fearful. But I remembered that David, when young, managed a sling in a just cause, and gained a wonderful victory. So I felt justified in attempting to vindicate the cause of truth and righteousness. After we had spent some time in proposing questions, and making replies to each other, I said to my antagonist, That a good cause always produces good effects; and a bad cause produces evil effects; which saying is founded on the principles of true philosophy. Ergo,

if Universalism were a good cause, a true system, it would produce good effects in the hearts and practices of those who embrace it—its fruits were known in the neighbourhood, being open to the view of all. I moreover remarked, that as far as my knowledge extended, it was an incontestable fact, that Universalism never did bring a sinner upon his knees repenting before the Lord; it never changed a drunkard into a sober man; or turned a profane swearer into a praying saint; it never led a man to forsake his sins, to keep the holy sabbath, or to bear the sacred cross of Christ. Having never seen any good effects produced by that doctrine, I therefore considered the system dangerous, untrue, and radically corrupt.

As I closed my argument, the old veteran bounded upon his feet, apparently displeased, and warmly said, "that the Methodists would not argue justly." So the debate, together with the visit, came suddenly to a termination. He and his friend immediately left us; and I have not seen the gentleman since.

A free, conditional salvation, appeared to many, even at that day, not only rational, but consistent with the tenor of the holy oracles. We discovered around our circuit that this doctrine was gaining influence; like leaven, it was slowly, but favourably affecting the candid part of community. Truth possesses intrinsic loveliness; and the truly conscientious seeker after truth is always happy to find it, because truth makes its possessor free. While teaching the way of life and salvation, we were encouraged to see the field of our labour opening on every side. The societies, generally, were in a prosperous condition, growing in

knowledge and grace. As some died in triumph and went to their rest, others came in and filled their places in the church. So this laborious year closed in peace and prosperity.

As Peter said to his brethren in an hour of temptation, "I go a fishing;" the others said, "We also go with thee." They went, toiled all night, but caught nothing. In the morning when Jesus came to them they saw the error into which they had fallen. At the close of this year I became involved in a similar temptation. I thought that it would be a judicious act for me to discontinue travelling the coming year to provide accommodations in some central place to settle my family—it being difficult then to obtain a comfortable habitation for a family on any circuit. After revolving the project awhile in my own mind, I came to the conclusion to ask the conference to give me no appointment for the coming year; but retain my name there, for I intended to take a charge in the succeeding year. Accordingly, I communicated my wishes to the conference; but there was no specified rule in the Discipline to authorize that body to grant my request in the form I desired it. They could, however, give me a location, and admit me again by regular application the next year.

So I accepted a location, and went on in my efforts to accomplish the object I had in view, with as good a resolution as Peter and his brethren had to catch fish. During that year I was engaged in my secular enterprise. I preached, however, on sabbath days, in different places, and endeavoured to do some good at such times. Still I felt restless and away from my proper

calling. At length I had the consolation to see my design completed, and was looking with much solicitude to the coming session of conference, which was drawing near. I began to realize that I had lost time in attending to worldly matters; and was anxious to go out again into the missionary field. The scheme I originated myself, hence the error rested on me alone. I ought to have trusted divine Providence more, and leaned not so much to my own understanding. The year was spent which bore on its face a blank in my ministerial career. I therefore record the act as an error in my life.

CHAPTER IX.

Genesee Conference—Chenango circuit—Early preachers—Liberal offer—Vile man—World in a mass—Discipline—Improvements—Watchmen—Journey to Niagara—Effects of war—The cataract—Western circuit—Mr. Sizer—Celebration speech—Welsh church—Visiting—Dying sinner—Epidemic—A letter—Ebenezer White gone—Sketch of a discourse—William Case—A dream—What have I done?

Now a new era in the history of Methodism began in Western New-York. The Susquehannah, Cayuga, and Upper and Lower Canada districts, were set off and formed into a new conference, which was denominated Genesee Conference; and it held its first session this year, July 20, 1810, at Lyonstown, where, according to my calculation, I was readmitted into the itinerant connection, and appointed to travel Chenango circuit, where I had provided a home for my family. My old friend, Rev. E. White, was appointed to be my companion in labour again, and the year following this we were permitted to remain together on the same territory, which, in our view, was a favourable providence. We understood each other's mode of operating. We had endured oppositions, privations, and hardships together, and we had often rejoiced together over the victories of the *cross*. So we became greatly endeared to each other.

Verily, no one can believe that wealth, ease, or honour was the object which induced men at that early day to desire a place in the travelling ministry. Nothing less than a call from God, together with a love for immortal souls, would move a man to leave his home,

his friends, to suffer want and reproach, and to lay his strength and life on the ministerial altar. The support they received was such a mere pittance, that they were under a necessity to resort to the most rigid economy to make their scanty means go round the year. The circuits they travelled were generally from two to three hundred miles round, over rough, miry roads, from settlement to settlement, having withal to preach twenty-five or thirty sermons every month. Why did they do it? The answer is obvious: To save souls that were like lost sheep in the wilderness, and to sow the word of God, that Bible religion might grow and flourish there. These self-denying pioneers laid the foundation of Methodism in this new country, at a great sacrifice. Do the young preachers, who now move round in village stations, know how Methodism first came to these places?—when and by whom it was planted there? Some among the number, who toiled at the beginning, have gone to rest, and their names are almost forgotten on earth; and the others will soon be numbered with the dead. Some of those early preachers were educated men; but far the greater part were not. Still God made no difference in the administration of his crowning favours. The same holy unction was common among them. Their labours were wonderfully blessed, though they had to contend against strong oppositions and inveterate prejudices. As the apostles did, so did they. "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

This ample circuit extended down the valleys of the Chenango and Unadilla Rivers, and over the hills

which bordered these winding streams. Even then improvements were rapidly gaining an ascendency over the wilderness in every direction. At the central points of business, along the rivers, small villages were growing up into notice. Indeed, the inhabitants were numerous; the wilderness was swarming with life and reasoning beings, waiting to receive the messengers of God. In my contemplations I was naturally led to consider what the Lord said by the prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks." I concluded that the apostles were the fishermen who first drew the gospel net. Others since have been called and commissioned as hunters: and I thought that the Methodist travelling preachers were the Lord's spiritual hunters, in these latter days, sent out to hunt lost sinners who were astray in the wilderness. So it appeared that our romantic circuit, peopled with fallen, sinful souls, was all an open hunting ground before us; and we were well mounted, dressed in plain hunting coats, equipped with the elastic gospel bow, and our quivers filled with the bright pointed arrows of truth. As we practised, we learned that we must always aim at the sinner's heart to accomplish the triumphant end.

In one of the villages where we preached, a gentleman, a member of another communion, waited on me, and made me pledges, amounting in all to a generous salary, on condition that I would stop with them and be their minister. He observed that I might preach

the same doctrines I had been promulgating; only come over and serve them was all they would require of me. But I was well equipped for travelling, had engaged to range the hills and valleys, and did not wish to exchange my hunting coat for a cumbersome surplice. Being thus bound, by promise to God and his church, to do a great work on an extensive plan, I therefore told the gentleman I could not consent to stay with him. We parted with mutual good feelings, and I immediately rode off among the hills to gain some stars to beautify my crown in heaven.

Near the Unadilla River, a neighbourhood had been favoured with a powerful reformation. Many, who had been brought to repentance, had found their way into the kingdom of grace; and a day was appointed on which the converts were to be admitted to the holy ordinance of baptism. After I had delivered a discourse on the occasion, the assembly repaired to the margin of the river to see the solemn ceremony performed. Near the place selected for the purpose, a lofty bridge was standing, which was occupied by spectators, while others took places on the banks of the river. When the candidates were called forward, twenty-five presented themselves to receive baptism by immersion. The preparatory ceremony, used on such occasions, being closed, I led one after another into the gliding stream. As I held a lady by the hand, leading her into the water, her husband, an enemy to Christians, cried out from among the crowd on the bridge, commanding me not to baptize his wife, and added a legal threat. I paused a moment, and asked the lady if she wished to be baptized; she answered in the affirmative, and

began to sing aloud as she walked into the water, where she was accordingly immersed. After the unhappy man had disgorged his venom on the bridge, he hastened away from the crowd, muttering, "that he had a yoke of oxen, and he would spend their value in money to execute vengeance on me." Brother John Eastwood, a true disciple, gaining knowledge concerning the malicious threat, said, "that he had a span of horses worth more than his oxen, and they should stand in the gap to indemnify me." The enraged man, as we were informed afterward, obtained legal counsel, made himself much trouble, and at last found that no action could be made to lie against me, because his wife had received no injury by going into the water, and he had sustained no damage by the act; therefore he had no legal claim on me. So, by his malicious attempt, he showed the vileness of his heart, lost some reputation, and gained nothing in the end.

What a medley the world exhibits! Various characters are strangely grouped and commingled together, with lights and shades strikingly contrasted. Their various mental castes and tastes appear; some in a rough native condition, others changed by education and moral culture. Some without a rag of righteousness to cover them; others adorned with the robe of pure religion. While some endeavour to benefit their fellow-beings, others gratify their fiendlike wills in doing harm. Malice and kindness, virtue and vice, benevolence and covetousness, humility and ostentation, piety and profanity, are all obvious parts in the scenes which are continually acted in the drama of human life. Indeed, man is an enigma in creation. By his

double nature, matter and spirit, he lives two lives at once, and holds a relation to two worlds, attended by wonderful providences, while tremendous consequences await him. Every thinking mortal desires to be happy; but in what true happiness consists, their opinions are as various as their schemes to acquire it are dissimilar; each one is pursuing a course to gain enjoyment. So the world appears in motion, like ants on a molehill; each one is acting a brief part on the caverned earth, into which they are continually dropping, and are hidden from our view by the veil which covers them.

In those days, our Discipline was observed with great punctuality by preachers and people. Class meetings were held in due form; and love-feasts were Christian love-feasts indeed. The members of our community were also conformed to rule in their apparel, which punctuality comported well with their holy profession. Rich and poor, old and young, came to be admitted with a full understanding that our practical rules must be observed; and they generally assented to them without hesitation, believing that such self-denying acts were necessary to constitute a real Christian:—for they had learned from the Bible that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Admitting that our peculiarities drew upon us some scoffing remarks from the ignorant, trifling world, still our course was according to Scripture; and we were consistent with our profession as Christians and as Methodists,—the Discipline was not a *dead letter*. Our strictness was a powerful example of Bible simplicity, too strongly founded in truth and reason to be

laughed down or overturned by argument. Simplicity and strictness, the original and beautiful attributes of Methodism, have done much to give us popularity and influence in the world.

It is gravely thought, however, that as we are in a world of experiments, one generation improving on another, nothing should stand permanently in one position; arts, politics, business, religion, all should keep on the same whirl of improvement, to suit every changeful period. In truth, improvements are very desirable things; but what one might call an improvement another would call a disastrous change. It is evident that in the course of thirty years many things have been advancing toward a state of perfection, many inventions have been studied out, and brought in to aid the arts and sciences. Indeed, the civilized nations, in some secular matters, are growing more wise. But man cannot make the law of God more perfect, or make any improvement on the plan of salvation. These are perfect designs, which came down from heaven, and are made eternal fixtures in His kingdom. A man may improve on his own plans and works, but he cannot improve on the designs of God. The doctrines and precepts taught and established by Jesus Christ are immutable things, and will remain so till he shall come again. The road to heaven is as narrow now as it was eighteen hundred years ago, and the same strait gate remains at the entrance, as Jesus Christ first designed it, through which all must pass to enter into his kingdom. The conditions of salvation remain unaltered. It costs as much penitence, humility, and self-denial, now to gain heaven as it did in

the days of the apostles. All the practical rules contained in the gospel every Christian is sacredly bound to observe.

Holiness being the gospel standard of the Christian character, the Methodist Discipline was framed according to the pattern contained in the Holy Scriptures, with an intention to raise up a holy people. It is only an epitome of precepts found in the gospel; and it is not too strict to mould the Christian character. We could undoubtedly add numbers to our community if we had no Discipline. It is one thing to gather numbers, and another to build up the church of Christ with holy members.

Is Methodism improved upon and made more perfect by keeping open doors, when the church is holding her love-feasts, where, without distinction, the thoughtless and profane commingle with the devout, and the *bread* and *water*, the confessed symbols of Christian love and fellowship, are handed round to careless sinners, who often irreverently trifle with them? And besides, during the social exercises, even while some are speaking, frequent interruptions occur by the doors opening, and strangers crowding in, which greatly disturbs their devotions, distracts their thoughts, and prevents many from speaking who are deficient in confidence. Love-feasts conducted on this plan are only love-feasts in name, a cold lifeless round of ceremonies, without any interest or spirituality.

To be vain in dress is evidently a departure from Christian simplicity, and the practice appears more inexcusable in our church than among others; besides, it makes us appear very inconsistent; for in taking the

baptismal covenant upon ourselves this question was proposed, "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?" To which we did thus reply, "I renounce them all." Where are our solemn vows, while we are following the foolish fashions of the world?

The ministers of the gospel are God's watchmen, appointed to guard the church, and they have the power to mould the Christian community committed to their charge. The Bible and Discipline are in their hands, and they are not only accountable for their manner of preaching, but for the administration of Discipline also. They have the power to correct these innovations, and to check the growth and spread of evils in the church. Even small evils are dangerous things, hence they should not be neglected. Revolutions, in civil communities, often commence by small changes, which prepare the way for broader movements and greater innovations. So in the government of a church, to dispense with one practical rule prepares the way for the neglect of another; and so on till every practical rule becomes despoiled of its virtue and efficiency by the sweeping changes, leaving nothing standing but a dead letter. In this way churches generally decline, and lose their glory and spirituality; and when their practical godliness becomes extinct, it is useless for them to boast that their *creed* is good.

My colleague, Rev. E. White, was an excellent disciplinarian, and a mighty angel in the church: like

Stephen of old, he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost. His whole deportment showed a pattern of meekness; still he was manly and courageous; and stood a fearless advocate for the truth. He spoke zealously, according to the emotions of his heart, but was not boisterous. Extraordinary excitements often occurred in congregations where he preached, and he himself, though a tall, muscular man, had been seen to fall, involuntarily, on the stand, while proclaiming the word of God with power. I was present one sabbath day, when he was preaching to a large congregation in the forest; the Holy Spirit came down upon him there in such an overwhelming manner, that it seemed to him he could not retain his position: instantly he cried out, "Lord, withhold thy hand." He confessed to me afterward that he did wrong, and quenched the Spirit, by yielding to a sudden temptation. At the same time the divine Spirit was operating on all around, which was evidently seen in the devout appearance of the congregation. But when the solemn sacramental scene was opened, it seemed that heaven was opened at the same time, and filled the wilderness where we were assembled with unearthly glory. Joyful exclamations, tears, and dread, all conspired to tell, emphatically, that the God of salvation was there. Among these happy worshippers there was a Presbyterian deacon, who said to me afterward, that it seemed to him he could almost hear the angels sing and rejoice with us while we were celebrating the Saviour's love at the communion table.

During our appointed mission on this circuit we enjoyed many such refreshing seasons from the pre-

sence of the Lord; and besides, we were favoured with some powerful reformations, which, *morally*, turned the wilderness into the garden of the Lord. In the day of the Lord's power his people are made willing servants, loyal subjects, and obedient children. The Christian people being willing to work, the Lord worked with them, and wonderful changes were produced. These reformations were marked by deep, pungent convictions of sin. Sinners being slain by the holy law, saw clearly the sinfulness of sin, and its destructive consequences; and as soon as they were delivered from the guilt which burdened their souls, they arrived at an experimental certainty that their sins were forgiven. The evidence that they had passed from death to spiritual life was written on their hearts. They loved the God of love supremely; loved the Christian brethren because they were Christ's followers; and they loved their enemies likewise, which an unregenerated soul has neither power nor disposition to do.

A man may change his purpose, forsake his sinful practices, and establish a moral character among his neighbours, which is a proper course of conduct; but after all this is done he is not a Christian, he is only a moral man; he must have a change wrought in him,—must be born of the Spirit, and have the image of God impressed on his soul, before he can properly claim the Christian character. A robe of self-righteousness may make a sinner appear sanctimonious in the view of men; but in the sight of God he appears like a whited sepulchre, garnished without, while darkness and moral death reign within. Reader, if thou art the

man, go immediately and make application to Heaven, by faith and prayer, to obtain the benefit of the atonement made by Jesus Christ, that your iniquities may be forgiven, and the impurity of your heart washed away.

At length these two years, which had been accompanied with toil and anxiety, came to a close, leaving me to enjoy the happy reflection that I had not travelled and laboured in vain. I had seen the power of redeeming grace exerted on many subjects who had been enslaved by Satan. Some branches of the church had been enlarged and strengthened, which was a joyful circumstance not only to me, but to all the children of God. Moreover, I had widened the circle of my acquaintance, and though I was about to be separated from them, these Christian associations formed central points where weary thought could return and find a momentary rest. These changes being necessary for the good of the church, and unavoidable in our revolving ministry, I had prepared myself to meet all such events; so I was perfectly resigned when they came.

This year, 1812, our conference being appointed to hold its session July 23d, at Niagara, Upper Canada, we had to reserve some time to make preparations, and to travel the long and dreary road. No canal or railroad was then constructed to convey travellers easily and rapidly along their way; hence, according to our custom, we mounted our horses equipped in Methodistical style, and rode on our way with cheerful hearts. Our journey to Niagara was attended with some delightful anticipations. We had often read descriptions of the great cataract; but some of us had

never gazed on that amazing natural wonder. This innocent curiosity afforded some relief to our minds, along the wearisome road. We crossed the Genesee River at Rochester, which then was only a small village. Thence we travelled on the Ridge Road, which is a great natural curiosity, resembling a turnpike road, only it is much wider. The ridge is composed chiefly of sand and gravel, and is generally so hard that wheels make but little impression upon it. The soil on both sides of this ridge is mostly clayey. This natural wonder extends from the Genesee River to Lewistown, ranging with the Ontario Lake, at about nine miles distance from its shore. Conjecture, founded on probability, says, that the lake once claimed dominion to that bound, and the action of its rolling waves formed the solid ridge on which we travelled. The country along the road, at this time, was new and very sickly, which made our passage through it gloomy and unpleasant. Grain, however, was plenteous and cheap. Our horses were fed on the best of wheat, which cost us only twenty-five cents per bushel.

On reaching the Canadian shore, the calamitous effects of war rushed immediately upon our view. We walked over the battle-ground where an engagement, a short time before, had occurred, and saw piles of human bones lying, where the dead bodies were piled and burned after the battle. I gathered a handful of these bony fragments, which, by the action of the fire, had crumbled from the frame of a father, a son, a husband, or a brother; but which, no one could tell. I viewed the commingled fragments with painful emotions, and thought on the horrible spirit and conse-

quences of war. How unlike the genius of the gospel, and the kind, merciful spirit of its Author! How can I reconcile my feelings to such cruel, unchristian butchery! O, when will peace and benevolence triumph over this wretched world!

One day, after the morning session was closed, I took the opportunity, in company with some ministerial brethren, to gratify my curiosity in visiting the falls. At some distance we could see the curling vapours ascending, and hear the roaring torrent, as the changeful winds bore along the sound, now dying away, now swelling into a thundering roar, which was majestic music to our ears. We moved onward with a nimble step, anxious to behold nature in her own sublimity, and hear her play a loud *solo* on her big organ. At length we arrived in view of the tremendous scene; and after beholding, for some time, the amazing rush from the *table rock* above, where the whole appeared grand and terrific, we turned and went along the bank some distance, then descended to the margin of the river by rude, temporary steps, constructed to accommodate visiters; and travelled over piles of broken rocks up to the edge of the terrible sheet, where, in falling into the foamy gulf below, it not only deafened us with its incessant roar, but mantled us with a misty cloud, through which appeared the gaudy hues on the magical arches standing over the thundering gulf. One, in our company, being more courageous than myself, ventured between the rock and the falling sheet of water, where, in a few minutes, he became drenched by the spray, and soon was glad to retrace his steps along the rugged, slippery passage, to breathe again the upper air.

To a contemplative mind, enamoured with the works of nature, this cataract opens an awful and engaging scene. Mere description can never give a perfect representation of it. To understand it fully, it must be seen with an attentive, measuring eye, and weighed with proper reflection. Go to the Canadian side, and stand on the rocky platform which projects over the edge of the dreadful abyss; there contemplate the amazing scene before you, which, for many centuries, has thus remained with all its grand features in gloomy solitude; and also reflect that on those rocks savage rovers have often stood, and gazed with wonder, whooped, and danced in wild ecstasies at the hoarse music of the roaring cataract. Then picture, in your imagination, the Indian in his bark canoe, coming on the rolling current down upon the frightful edge of the tumbling torrent; and then see him plunge into the dark abyss below; then you will begin to *think* deeply, and *feel* also the reality and sublimity of the scene! A momentary horror will seize you; and then you will imagine that the rocks tremble under your feet, and are going down into the dreadful gulf below.

The conference soon closed its session, and I was appointed, this year, to the charge of Western circuit. It being only what was denominated a two weeks' circuit, I was consequently left to travel alone. But, in addition to the managing business, I was required to preach as often as I did on the large circuits. Though the territory over which I travelled was not large, the travelling labour was considerable, taking into the account the rough state of the country at that time. The following towns—Western, Lee, Rome, Floyd, and

Steuben—were embraced in my circuit. The latter town derived its name from Baron Steuben, who was a gentleman of notoriety in the military world.

After the revolutionary war, Baron Steuben made himself the possessor of a tract of land in that country, where he spent the last days of his life. During his residence there, he abode some time with Mr. Sizer, to whom he remarked, some time before his decease, "When my end shall come, I wish to steal away from the world, and have no stone to tell where I lie." He selected a spot for his own grave, in a piece of woodland, near a spring of water, in which secluded place he was afterward buried, according to his own special request. And there, with trees surrounding, covered with mouldering leaves, the visiter may behold the humble tomb where a fragment of human greatness lies, without a sculptured monument to tell his deeds.

In Steuben I became acquainted with a worthy family by the name of Sizer, who were well informed, and highly esteemed in the neighbourhood, at whose house I found a social, pleasant home, whenever I came into the town. The greater part of the family were members of our communion. The old gentleman being troubled with skeptical notions, it was a long time before he could learn to trust God, and exercise faith on Jesus Christ. At length, however, after fulfilling the obligations which rested on him as a sinner, he entered the strait gate, and learned the mystery contained in experimental religion; and by grace he was afterward enabled to live a devoted life. His son, Joel Sizer, who resided with him, was intelligent, and decidedly pious, who afterward became a useful local preacher.

In those days speculative masonry was in high repute. Mr. Joel Sizer and his father were distinguished members of the fraternity, in that region. A spacious room, in the upper part of their mansion, was the designated place where the brotherhood assembled to transact their peculiar business. According to long-established custom, a great celebration was approaching; and an appropriate speech, as usual, would be expected on the occasion. Though a stranger to their mystical art, I was respectfully requested, by their officers, to deliver a discourse on that day. The invitation I cheerfully accepted, hoping that the labour would not be in vain. So, on the day appointed, I repaired to the place, and, while the brotherhood were attending to some preparatory formalities in their room above, I was waiting in thoughtful suspense below. At length it was announced, by the master of ceremonies, that the fraternity were ready to hear the address; at which time the door was opened to admit all who wished to be present. This privilege being understood, many in the neighbourhood had come in to enjoy the opportunity. So, in a few minutes, the spacious room was filled with auditors. On reaching my place, I observed on the desk a large Bible opened, on which lay a square and compass, placed, with evident design, so as to include in a triangular space the first verse of the one hundred and thirty-third Psalm. By the means used to direct my eye to this passage of Scripture, I was induced to believe that they wished me to found my discourse upon it. After musing on the subject a few minutes, while the attendants were arranging themselves to hear, I arose and pronounced

the words in question, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

After a few introductory remarks, an attempt was made to illustrate the delightful doctrine of unity and its consequences, which form the burden of the Psalmist's exclamation in the text. Unity was first considered and presented in four aspects: *natural, political, social,* and *divine.* To carry out the sketch, I observed, that *natural unity* is the result of the potent laws of attraction and adhesion. Every particle of matter in the material world is under the control of these physical laws,—the various solids which compose the earth; the liquid particles that form the ocean; all are under their influence. And in the animal creation, an instinctive law of unity is seen operating, in arranging the feathered tribes in flocks, and associating the roving animals according to their species in companies—individualy attracted to their own kind, and governed by a natural feeling and interest.

Political unity consists in the confederating law which unites individuals in a national compact; this unity constitutes the strength and sinews of every political body. Though an individual is weak alone, a multitude of such individuals, combined together, form a powerful body. One spider's thread is slender and weak, but only combine enough of these threads to make a large rope, and it would hold a ship while riding at anchor. Unity is power—dissolve a nation's unity, and it will crumble under its own weight, like a ball of moist sand before a fire.

Social unity is an agreement formed, under certain regulations, by any number of persons, to accomplish

some important object; or for the mutual benefit of each other. By their harmonious counsels they devise measures to advance the interests of their cause, and adopt plans to carry their designs into execution. Their mutual obligations form the ligaments of their social body, and mould the character of their brotherhood. So, in virtue of their union, they frequently call each other by the kindly appellation, *brother*.

Divine unity stands above the other degrees of unity, and crowns the whole design with beauty, glory, and perfection. This sacred bond of unity extends from earth to heaven, connecting the children of God to God, their heavenly Father, and runs from heart to heart throughout the whole heavenly family. The immortal angels, and all the glorified throng above, feel its power and enrapturing charm. So, on earth, all Christians are one in Christ, in virtue of this celestial bond—stones in one building, branches on one vine, members of one family, having one Father, one Redeemer. Hence, Christians are all brethren in a proper, high, and perfect sense.

After illustrating the doctrine of *unity*, I took up the second proposition, and exhibited the happy consequences attending it. "Behold, how *good* and how *pleasant* it is for *brethren* to dwell together in unity!" —especially Christian brethren. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." A marked attention and seriousness

prevailed in the assembly while I was speaking; and the fraternity gave me a satisfactory token that they were well pleased with what I had *done*, or with what I had left *undone!*

The Steuben hills were partly settled by emigrants from Wales; and a church was formed among them, which gave them a religious character. They called themselves Whitefield Methodists. Calvinistic doctrines held a conspicuous place in their creed. Their devotional exercises were apparently ardent, though generally performed in their vernacular tongue

One day their minister was preaching on the sufferings of Christ, and as he progressed in the moving theme, he became very much excited himself, and grew more and more ardent in his manner, when, suddenly, a man of strong sensibility, who sat some distance from the pulpit, being enraptured with the subject, arose, apparently unconscious of what he was doing, and stepped slowly forward toward the desk with his streaming eyes fixed on the preacher, crying out at intervals, as he moved along, "Bless him!—Bless him!—Bless him!" Meaning, bless the Saviour who was thus crucified for man's redemption. What a consolation it is to *feel* the truth when we hear it proclaimed!

Though other churches had been established in this region before ours, still the most of the ground was unoccupied. The field was large, and the harvest great. I had room on every side, and work in abundance before me. Visiting, as our Discipline directs, from house to house, I found, by actual experiment, was attended with good consequences: many local prejudices were

removed by that means, and a way opened to the hearts of the people. To visit in the name of the Lord, and make a serious business of it, is the way to move the moral elements. It is, however, a laborious undertaking, and whoever engages in the work, must expect to meet with some opposition; but the results will be glorious in the end.

When operating on the visiting plan in villages, I sought admittance at the first door, rich or poor,—if strangers, I pronounced my name, and told them likewise that I was a minister sent by Jesus Christ, and had come there to converse with them a few minutes on religious subjects. So after making some general remarks, applicable to all, I turned and spoke, in friendly terms, to each individual in the room, asking questions and obtaining answers if I could. After I had gone round the circle in this class-meeting form, it was my invariable practice to ask liberty to pray with them, which was always granted. Immediately after that duty was closed, I gave my hand to each one, imparting, at the same time, a word of instruction; and so left them and went on to the next door, and did likewise, then to the next, and so on.

One day, while on a visiting excursion, I came to a house occupied by a large family, where I was known as a minister. The master of the house was an enemy to true religion, and, fortunately for the family, he was not within when I came there. In conversation with the members of the house, I found that they were thoughtful, and anxious to obtain an interest in the great salvation. So they all voluntarily knelt with becoming reverence, when I addressed the throne of

grace. While there devoutly speaking to God, I heard the door open—the owner being disturbed by the sound of prayer, which had reached his ears without, and influenced by a wicked spirit, had filled his arms with wood, opened the door and come in, walking with a heavy step across the room, and threw the wood down with violence; then returned with a noisy tread, and went out at the same door, slamming it after him. Without any pause, I continued praying for the family, as if nothing uncommon had happened —what the old sinner has done since I know not.

At the request of a young lady I went one day to visit her father, who was dangerously ill. He was a man of this world truly; all his interest was here below; earth was his only paradise: his heart and affections were all coiled around his earthly possessions. It seemed that he had never employed his thoughts wisely in numbering his days, but went on adding plan to plan for this life, as if he were to have his immortality below. In the midst of his blooming hopes, while gathering materials to construct his contemplated dwelling, he was taken sick, and the symtoms of his disease were alarming. One physician after another was called to his aid in vain: to stimulate them to exert all their skill, he assured them that they should be richly remunerated if they would only save his life. But, alas! his disease was too mighty for human skill to control—he was in a hopeless state.

The poor man seemed to realize that death was his inevitable doom, and that the dreadful moment was near when I came to visit him. Unhappy man!—I cannot

forget, neither describe, the commotion of his troubled mind as it was depicted in his countenance, and expressed by words and tones which he occasionally uttered. All his thoughts appeared to centre in one single desire, and that was to live. "Why me—why me!" he often exclaimed. "Why must I die—why not some other person?" He could not endure the thought that he must be the mark for the fatal arrow of death. Though perfectly rational, it was a difficult thing to bring his mind to feel the need of salvation from sin, to prepare him for the other world. While I tried to pray for him, it is hoped that he prayed for himself. But, O! unfortunately, he had lived without God in the world, and made no preparation for a dying hour. Hence dismay and disappointment rolled like waves upon him. He was gloomy, and actually afraid to be alone—when one left the room some other one came in. His room appeared dismal to him, for death, his foe, had given him notice that he should soon visit him there; and accordingly he did. Reader, you must die! Are you a sinner, a worldling?—go immediately and prepare for death.

While I was travelling this circuit, the country was visited with a raging disease, which, on account of its prevalence, was appropriately called an *epidemic*. It spread like a pestilence, though it was not supposed to be contagious. Violence characterized the disease in its onset, which made the struggle between life and death short and doubtful. After running on a few days—sometimes only a few hours—it formed a crisis, and generally terminated fatally.

When the *epidemic* first made its appearance the

physicians by some means misunderstood its real character, deceived, probably, by the marked, inflammatory symptoms which accompanied its early stages. Hence to control these threatening symptoms they adopted the common authorized course of depletion, which mode of practice disappointed their expectations. At length it was ascertained that a general debility attended the disease, which indicated the necessity of resorting to stimulants to counteract its typhoid tendency. By adopting this philosophical course of practice, the physicians were much more successful: still it was a season of great affliction and mortality.

At this time of general distress a large, corpulent man, with whom I had a partial acquaintance, was violently seized with the epidemic. A messenger was immediately sent to call a physician, who shortly arrived: but it was too late; the dreadful scene was opened; the man was expiring when he came into the room. This unhappy man was mentally involved in skepticism: he disowned the truth of revelation, and, hence, had no confidence in prayer, or any religious ceremonies. It was said, however, that he prayed once, or rather expressed a desire that when his end should come he might die suddenly, and have no preaching over his dead body. Accordingly he died suddenly, as before related; and the following day his body, which weighed, according to report, five hundred pounds, was put into a coffin, and borne by twelve men a few rods from the house, and buried there. A sermon was delivered on the occasion, immediately afterward, in the house. So there was no preaching over his body.

The following account was communicated in a letter to my sister, who resided in Otsego county at that time.

Lee, March 28, 1813.

DEAR SISTER,—This holy sabbath has been accompanied with unusual blessings, and some afflictive occurrences. In the afternoon my appointment was at deacon Clark's, where I preach statedly on the sabbath. At the close of the exercise, while the hymn was being read, Mr. Goodenough, in company with his wife, (both members of the church in that neighbourhood,) drove up and stopped before the door, with the lifeless remains of their son in a coffin. We suspended the devotional exercises for a few minutes to sympathize with these afflicted friends—the scene was affecting. The circumstances connected with this event are quite remarkable. This young man was among the volunteers, who were called out to guard our northern border, in the last war. Soon after he gained the station a mortal affliction fell upon him, and, at his request, his parents went out to visit him, and remained there till he died; then returned home with his corpse, as before stated.

This youth had been a zealous Christian, but had strayed away from the course of duty, and fallen into sinful practices. But while under affliction he was brought to see and feel his fallen condition; and through repentance, prayer, and faith, he obtained the witness that God had forgiven all his sins before he left the world. His mental faculties were active and perfectly sane to the last minute of his life. He planned the order of his funeral; selected his own

bearers, all irreligious young men, his companions in wickedness, hoping that the solemn task would alarm their sleepy consciences; and gave some orders concerning tombstones for his own grave; and, furthermore, said to his parents, "I shall die before night. So you can make every necessary preparation, and return home before divine service will be closed next sabbath; and then notice can be given to the congregation for my funeral rites to be performed on the following day:"—so it came to pass exactly. And after a moment's reflection he further said, 'Mr. Giles will be there, whom I desire should preach my funeral sermon"—and with much feeling added: "Tell Mr. Giles to warn the young people for me; and tell the church, that I confess my backslidings to them—tell all that I have repented for my transgressions; and warn them also not to do as I have done. I shall be there," he added, "but I shall not be able to speak—I shall be there in spirit and see you all. A glorious being is now standing near me who will escort my spirit away; and this being told me last night, that this day I should be with him in paradise." Then he said again, "I shall die before night."

In the afternoon of the same day he was able to sit up in his room in company with his parents. As the day was drawing to a close he said to his father, "The work is finishing." He then arose from his chair, laid off his loose coat, placed himself on his bed, and died without a struggle or groan.

According to arrangements, the funeral service was performed on the following Monday, as the youth planned it before his death. The solemn and affect-

ing event brought a multitude to the house of mourning, where every one appeared to sympathize with the afflicted, and listen, too, with due attention, while I attempted to illustrate the following text: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Many circumstances conspired to give an impressive influence, which was evidently felt by many in the congregation, while the cheering doctrines contained in the text were opened before them. But when the dead began to speak, or rather when I attempted to perform the affecting task to speak for the dead youth, who said "that he should be present, but should not be able to speak for himself;" then there was a tremendous move in the assembly: tears fell like a shower of rain on every side. There I stood, and pointed to the pale, lifeless body, and pronounced his words for him; warned his youthful, gay associates; presented his humble confession to the church; and sounded his warning to all, not to do as he had done. There sat the young men in tears whom he had selected for bearers, dressed in mourning, and some of the youth besides wore sable badges of sorrow. This solemn scene will be remembered in the dreadful judgment day. I am your affectionate brother,

C. GILES.

After a few more weeks had passed away, the melancholy intelligence arrived, that my old associate, Rev. E. White, had fallen in the field of his labours by the epidemic. This afflicting event, coming so unexpectedly, produced a painful sensibility in the hearts of ministers and people, throughout the region

where he was known. Being highly esteemed by the church, and respected by all who knew him, his decease was viewed as a public calamity. "O the depths, both of the wisdom and knowedge of God! how unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out!"

He was naturally endowed with a robust constitution; but, in consequence of a fractured limb, he was afterward subjected to affliction during his natural life. This troublesome event, which fell upon him while he was questioning his call to travel and preach, he believed was a providential admonition to teach him to obey the call. So the doubtful question was decided. He entered the travelling ministry in 1802; and devoted the remainder of his life to the holy cause. But his fractured limb remained unsound—often in an inflamed and painful state, which caused a continual lameness. In this condition he travelled through storms, heat, and cold, even when his infirmity seemed to indicate dissolution near. Many, doubtless, in a similar condition, would have excused themselves from performing such laborious duties. But his ardent soul, burning with a holy flame, could not rest while sinners were perishing for lack of knowledge. When through infirmity he was unable to stand on his feet to preach, he knelt, and, in that humble posture, declared the whole counsel of God to his wondering hearers.

The circuits which he travelled being large, and his family residing in one place, often at a long distance from him, made his visits at home not only short, but far between. These events being necessary, were

endured with due submission by all the members of the family who understood the real cause. But the younger children were unwilling that their father should go away, and leave them and their mother to talk and mourn on account of his absence. One day, while he was preparing to leave home to go to his circuit, his little children gathered around, and thus affectionately addressed him :—"Father, why do you go away and leave us? We wish you would stay at home with us." To satisfy their anxious minds, he sat down and simply explained the cause to them; told them how the people had disobeyed God, had become great sinners, and the Lord had called him to go and preach to these sinners, to persuade them to repent and serve the Lord; and told his children, that many of these sinners had been converted where he had been preaching. After hearing the cause explained, the children appeared perfectly satisfied, and never afterward inquired why he went away and left them. But when he returned home, they would go to him and anxiously inquire, if any sinners had been converted where he had been. His labours being so wonderfully blessed, he always had some pleasing news to tell them concerning the work of the Lord in the conversion of sinners.

For some time before his decease, he was impressed with the idea that he had but a short time to remain on earth, which he expressed to several congregations in the following manner: "It seems that I am now delivering my last message to you." About three days before his decease he delivered a discourse on these words, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the peo-

ple of God." As Providence directed, this sermon, which was full of ardour and inspiration, was the last that he ever delivered. So, in triumph, he ended his ministerial labours.

While far from home, in Otsego county, this faithful servant of God was seized with the *epidemic*, which in about three days terminated his mortal life. The same day on which he fell asleep in Christ, he joined with the family in prayer, and ate at the table with them in the morning; and about thirty minutes before he expired, he raised the window to reprove some noisy children who were playing in the street, (it being the sabbath day.) Soon after this effort he lay down, and his unusual breathing alarmed the family, who were in the other part of the house: hastening into the room, they found him alive, but unable to utter a word. In a few minutes, while they were gazing upon him, he calmly sunk into the slumber of death without a struggle or groan.

Awhile after this melancholy event I left home to visit my parents, and also to be present at a camp meeting on Chenango circuit, where this deceased minister and myself had laboured together a few years before. It was a great gratification to meet my old friends and brethren there, in the quiet tented wilderness, to mingle our congenial spirits in devotional exercises, as we had been accustomed to do in departed seasons. Still there was a conscious void—memory was faithful to its trust; we could not forget our deceased brother White. We looked around and saw many faces which appeared familiar to us, but we did not see him through whose instrumentality many of

them had been converted—they pronounced his name, thought of other days, and wept.

Many, on the ground, were united in the opinion that a discourse ought to be delivered there, in commemoration of the painful event which had removed this shining *light* from the church. On account of my long acquaintance with him, I was selected to preach the sermon. Though feeling my insufficiency to answer the expectations and wishes of the vast multitude present, I had impressions on my mind which led me to consent to perform the weighty office. At the appointed hour, with mingled sensibilities, I arose and pronounced the following text: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints," Rev. xv, 3.

After the subject was opened by a brief introduction, the following method was pursued:—*First.* The works of God in creation. *Second.* The works of God in redemption. *Third.* The ways of God in the administration of his government. In speaking on the first proposition, I remarked, that everything which the hand of God had formed, appears great and marvellous. Everything in the wide field of nature, whether lying in dormant particles of matter, or germinating into vegetative forms, or moving in animated bodies, attracts our willing gaze, and excites admiration. The elements are wisely balanced too, or regulated by established laws, by which harmony is preserved in the universe, and nature's great family of living forms and living beings are sustained. When we turn our attention from scenes below, and look up to the starry heavens, we are lost in wonder and moved

to exclaim, Great and marvellous are the works of God! There those twinkling lamps have hung in the lofty dome of the universe, burning incessantly since they were first lighted by the Almighty's word. Who can scan their dimensions or tell their number? Still they are in continual motion, chained to their destined orbits by powerful, antagonistic laws, which keep them balanced in the unmeasured fields of space.

In viewing the wonderful works of God, we turned to consider *man*, the little thinking monarch of earth, who is the greatest wonder in the universe; the only being known that can read intelligibly the characters impressed on all created things, or has endowments to understand the will of God, and to render him rational praise. He is "*fearfully and wonderfully made.*" When viewed at a distance he appears like a moving speck of diminutive matter; but in that material form an immortal spirit resides, which, by invisible links, connects the world of matter with the world of mind. So man is a compound being, having two distinct natures, living two distinct lives at once; a mortal immortal, half clay and half angel, confined to this earth, still flying on the wings of thought over the universe. So man holds a distinguished place among the great and marvellous works of God.

Leaving this part of the subject, we passed on to the *second* proposition, and spoke concerning the works of God in the redemption of the world. After taking a view of the ruinous consequences attending the fall of man, our attention was drawn to the moving scene which accompanied the marvellous act of opening the seals that bound the mystical book, containing the

weighty scheme of redeeming love. The immortal Son of God comes down from heaven! robes himself in humble, frail humanity, to prepare himself to enter the mediatorial office, and, in assuming our nature, he stoops under the crushing law which he came to magnify, takes the ponderous curse on his own almighty shoulders, and lifts it from the condemned and sinking world. To become a perfect sin-offering, he gives himself up to suffer an ignominious death on the cross. There, surrounded by friends and foes, he pours his life a willing sacrifice on the altar of divine justice. In his extreme agony, while accomplishing the great atonement, he cried out, "*It is finished!*" and in his bleeding arms of mercy embraced the guilty world, and gave up the ghost. But, lo! death could not detain the eternal Prince of life. He rose victorious over death and the grave, ascended to heaven in glory and triumph, leaving us here below to rejoice and exclaim, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty," in redeeming a sinful world!

Then the *third* proposition was introduced, which brought under consideration the ways of God in the administration of his government. Clouds and darkness surround Jehovah's throne, which cannot be penetrated by mortal vision. Though his acts to the children of men are all perfect, just, and good, the designs connected with these acts being unknown to them, they are often heard to complain that their schemes have been frustrated; and hence they conclude that the ways of God in his government here below are not equal. But instead of complaining they should exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of

God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Mysteries follow mysteries everywhere under the reign of Providence. Many things are done, or suffered to be done, by divine superintendence, which we cannot now understand; but we shall know the designs hereafter. Even our greatest afflictions may be blessings in disguise, and temporal losses may result in eternal gain. We all must pass through tribulations and crosses here before we can reach our home in heaven. Here is our state of trial, but the world to come is the place of retribution: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So all at last will exclaim, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Here we took under consideration the mysterious providence which called brother White so soon away from the church militant, and left us to labour and suffer without him—left us to weep. And the people did weep. It was a solemn and affecting season.

Rev. William Case, who for many years since has been extensively known as a missionary among the Indian tribes in Upper Canada, was, at this time, my presiding elder, and during his continuance on the district I became intimately acquainted with him, both as a Christian and a minister. His affectionate disposition, devotedness to the interests of the church, attachment to his brethren in the ministry, piety, and ardent persuasive preaching, altogether, conspired to raise him in my estimation. So, by familiarity, my soul became united to his in the bonds of Christian friendship, which would necessarily make our separation grievous

to me. The year was then drawing to a close, at which time, according to our church economy, he would be removed from the district, and some other one appointed in his place.

Awhile before my last quarterly meeting I had a dream which affected me much more than dreams commonly do. In my nocturnal vision, I was travelling through a dreary wilderness, passed down a rough declivity, crossed a small ravine in a valley, and came to a spacious field, level and verdant, bordered with wood-land on the right and left. While passing along in a revery of delightful meditation, I arrived at the base of a beautiful eminence, which I immediately ascended, and was amused with the appearance of everything around me. The mount seemed to be in a high state of cultivation; and on the summit stood a building resembling a farm-house, surrounded partly by fruit-trees. While I was surveying the attractive scenery, which opened to my view on every side, brother Case, my presiding elder, came out of the cottage, and, in our conversation, I inquired after the name of the place: immediately he replied, "It is *Mount Pleasant.*" He appeared to be equipped for a journey, and in haste to be on his way. So, after we had performed the parting ceremony, he mounted a black horse that stood there ready for his use, and rode away and left me.

Soon after this event I met brother Case at a quarterly meeting, where, in our fireside colloquial conversation, I related my nocturnal rambling, without expressing any sentiment concerning the signification of the dream—if any signification accompanied it. To my conception, if the dream augured anything, riding

away, as he did, on a black horse, indicated a sudden death. But as soon as I had narrated the dream, brother Case, with a cheerful countenance, said, "The interpretation is plain: Oneida district is the Mount Pleasant; I shall leave it at the next conference, and you will come on and take my place." The interpretation, I supposed, was only a pleasant compliment, designed to pass off the dream.

This friendly intimation did not influence me to seek for elevation in the church, or to covet it. The difficulties and responsibilities connected with such stations were obvious to my understanding. And my inexperience, want of confidence, together with my educational sentiments, forbid me to advance, knowingly, one step beyond my proper sphere. By early instruction, I learned that a modest, unassuming manner, was an ornament to the character of a young man; and that it was more safe and becoming for one to move in a sphere even below his merited rank, than to show his weakness on an envied elevation above his proper level. So, from a sense of duty and propriety, I accustomed myself to keep on the lower ground.

This year being nearly elapsed, will suddenly disappear, and then two years will be numbered with the past since I came on to this circuit—two years less to labour for immortal souls. Life runs away like a rapid stream. What have I done in these two years? But little, indeed, when compared with the wants of the world and the church. I have, however, endeavoured to carry the word of life from house to house; preached some hundreds of sermons; attended a multitude of

other meetings; witnessed the converting grace of God on many souls; endured many trials; shared poverty with the poor, and gained some useful knowledge. Though this is not the way to live a life of ease and splendour, it is the way to live effectually, to glorify God, to save sinners, and to gain heaven at last.

CHAPTER X.

Conference—Closing scene—Dream again—Oneida district—Band of brethren—Sauquoit—Quarterly meetings—An incident—Mistaken man—Road to St. Lawrence—Quarterly meeting—Effects of lightning—Year ended—Conference at Lyons—Arrangements for the year—Methodism—Remarks on mysteries—A sick person healed—Effects of calomel—Vicissitudes in life.

Our next annual conference was held in Genoa, Cayuga county, July 14th, 1814. Though in its infancy, this section of the church, respecting both the ministry and membership, was in a prosperous condition, increasing in numbers, and rising in influence and respectability. Fifty-eight preachers composed the conference; and the territory over which they travelled was divided into four districts, including all the western region from the neighbourhood of Schenectady to Lake Erie. Though we found ourselves advancing, still our ministerial strength was altogether unequal to the vast amount of work which was rolling in upon our hands. The wide wilderness was an open field before us, which was then swarming with an active, intelligent generation of mortal beings, having many prejudices and conflicting opinions. The work was truly great, and the labourers comparatively few; but, being in the *regular succession*, we formed a courageous band of willing operators, not afraid of muddy roads, large circuits, persecution, wild cats, wolves, or hard times. Indeed, we were accustomed to hardships then, which now would frighten many who have tender nerves into a galloping location fever. We laboured hard, and

endured some tribulation; but, by suffering ourselves, we learned to sympathize with others in their sufferings. We were brethren, indeed, united in council, and harmonious in action, endeavouring to demolish the strong-holds of Satan.

In a few days the regular conference business was completed, and the parting hour arrived. The appointments being all made out by the bishop and his council, nothing remained but to hear them pronounced, cheerfully submit to the arrangements, and go on to our separate portions of work. Preachers having families, generally understood beforehand where their places of destination would be. But the young, unmarried men, whom the bishop called his "*lighthorsemen*," rarely knew, before the appointments were announced, what places they would occupy in the field of labour. Hence conflicting emotions accompanied this closing scene: our nimble horses, trained to the itinerant revolutions, were all standing there saddled, bearing each a portmanteau and valise, waiting, ready to carry us on, with seeming delight, to any point of the compass. As the appointments were read, I heard my name pronounced in connection with the charge of Oneida district. Strange emotions, I must confess, were excited in my mind, as the announcement reached my ear. But according to my early sacred vows, under which I had been acting all along, I was bound to submit to the dictation of the constituted authorities of the church, whose matured wisdom I conscientiously acknowledged. But the view I had respecting my own deficiency in skill, together with my limited experience in the governing department of

the church, excited in my mind an apprehension that I could not fill the office with becoming dignity to myself, or to the satisfaction of the religious community where I was appointed. Still I was convinced that it was my only proper course to go forward in the sphere where the church and the sway of Providence had placed me, and endeavour to do my duty. So I settled the commotions of my mind, fortified myself with renewed resolutions, put my trust in the Lord, and went courageously and joyfully on my way.

My dream then came into remembrance, which I have narrated before, concerning "Mount Pleasant," and the shrewd interpretation given by brother Case, which was literally fulfilled in my appointment. "You shall be my successor," he said, "in the charge of Oneida district." It is presumed that his influence in the council chamber was not wanting to consummate the event. He doubtless had the design in contemplation before I related to him the dream, which made him so pleasant on the occasion, and so ready to give it a solution. He innocently smiled, thinking shrewdly, that he should stand, at the conference, in the same relation to me as Joseph did to Pharaoh—a sage interpreter of dreams; and hence I should smile with him, and we should have a little harmless amusement over the termination of the event, to give our nerves a momentary rest.

"Mount Pleasant," properly Oneida district, according to established custom, was my appointed field of labour for the next four years. It encircled a large tract of country, abounding in hills and dales, and wild native scenery, embracing the greater part of Otsego

and Herkimer counties on the south and east, extending through Oswego county, along the shore of Lake Ontario, down the River St. Lawrence to Ogdensburg, including all the Black River region, together with Oneida county. This sketch will give the reader a bird's-eye view of the extent of my district, over which my duty called me to travel four times in a year to superintend the quarterly meetings. Though unavoidable hardships and weighty trials lay prospectively before me, I was not disheartened; gracious manifestations, invisible to a worldling's eye, supported me. Besides, nature had endowed me with a firm constitution; and my zeal then, in the ministerial cause, triumphed over dangers and difficulties. Congenial friends, in a cold-hearted world, are like stars in the night—like roses in winter, and springs of water in a desert. This consolation I enjoyed in the cheering circle of my ministerial brethren, who were appointed to labour with me. They were a happy constellation of spiritual lights, moving in their respective circuits, diffusing the light of truth wherever they went.

The district included eight circuits, on which were stationed sixteen preachers. James Kelsey was one among the number, a zealous, warm-hearted pioneer, who has since been called away to the pilgrim's rest in Abraham's bosom. Abner Chase was another; a social friend indeed, renowned for goodness, who talked truth into the hearts of the people so pathetically that they could not refrain from weeping. Zenas Jones, and Ira Fairbank, stood like pillars on my right and left, courageous as lions, persevering and industrious as bees. Chandley Lambert was there—a soldier of

the *cross*, famous for order and Methodistical things, who was so strict, and stood so straightly while administering discipline, that the enemies of strictness said tauntingly, he leaned over backward. Seth Mattison, a shining star in the constellation, with his sympathizing spirit and poetical imagination, ready to pour consolation into my heart. Goodwin Stoddard was also among them, a stanch advocate for the truth, fearless as David, who drove on like Jehu. Nathan B. Dodson was a brother indeed, diligent and watchful, who fed the sheep in the wilderness. Isaac Puffer was there also; plain in style and manner, moving like a telegraph, with much of the Bible in memory, which flowed, with chapter and verse, from his tongue like electricity, producing shocks and commotions among the conflicting creeds. And there was George Gary, also, a faithful friend, cautious and deliberate, with a head full of thoughts, and a tongue to tell them—a youth, though he had travelled and preached several years before. While in company with myself and others, all on our way out to conference, brother Gary was seated on a large horse, with his flaxen hair playing in the wind. As we were passing some labourers near the road, they, on seeing us, respectfully stopped their operations and gazed, wondering, as the sanctimonious company passed along—knowing that we were Methodist preachers. While looking at us they beheld brother Gary, our Benjamin, in the midst, attracted by his youthful appearance, which excited the workmen so that one said to the others, "They have got the boys along too." Being so near them, we haply heard the remark.

These men, together with some others, were stationed on the district; and there I found myself moving in the midst of them, happily engaged in the same glorious enterprise. Though variously gifted, they all operated on one plan, having one common object in view, and by their success and influence they reciprocally aided each other in demolishing the strong-holds of sin and error, and in building up a holy church on earth. So Providence favoured me with a faithful company of fellow-labourers, to cultivate and beautify *Mount Pleasant*. That name I could not forget, though it originated in a dream—the accompanying circumstances impressed it deeply on my memory. And brother Case remembered it likewise; for his written, friendly communications to me afterward—when sent by private conveyances—were directed to Mount Pleasant.

Sauquoit, in Oneida county, was a noted place in the district, withal a pleasantly-situated village in a fertile valley, swarming with an industrious and intelligent population, where a respectable Methodist society was established. Moreover, in that vicinity my oldest brother resided; and there also I was acquainted with many families in the society and neighbourhood. Therefore I selected this village, with these accompanying advantages, for the location of my family. And, in accordance with this design, I purchased a house, together with a few acres of land, situated on a pleasant road, and not far from the Methodist church, where I was happily domiciled—a place where body and mind could rest together, in the central point, called *home*. My house, after

being repaired, and its construction improved, was a comfortable residence for my small family; and also a peaceful resting place for my friends—the travelling preachers in particular, who were always welcome guests at any time, sick or well. My conjugal companion, as well as myself, esteemed it a great pleasure to entertain the servants of God, and to make them comfortable when afflicted. Indeed, justice requires me to say, that she always appeared to be greatly animated whenever employed in administering aid to the sick, or helping the needy: then she seemed to be in her element. No one in poverty or misery asked her aid in vain. She often wept over the beggar's tale of suffering; and sometimes gave away articles of apparel which she needed herself, to relieve such objects of want and misery.

In those days our quarterly meetings were noted seasons, which excited general interest. The circuits were large, containing some hundreds of communicants, divided into distinct societies, including many class-leaders, stewards, exhorters, and local preachers. These official members, when they met at these meetings, formed a large quarterly conference, where all the important business connected with the circuit was brought up and obtained conference action. The members of the church, coming from all directions, and from various distances, bringing some of their unconverted friends and neighbours with them to gain blessings and benefits there, added much to the importance and interest of these occasions. There these Christian friends formed an acquaintance with each other, which was renewed from time to time by being

present at these popular meetings. Indeed, quarterly meetings then were accounted great seasons, not only by our own church, but by many others in community: they were made the theme of conversation long beforehand, and all necessary preparations were made to attend them. Preachers and members, from neighbouring circuits, frequently attended these meetings, alternately. Such an assemblage of Christian brethren, with various gifts, united in devotion, made the prayer meetings moving scenes—conversions were common occurrences at these meetings. In the love-feasts tidings were brought in from all parts of the circuit: there we heard them speak concerning the work of God in their respective neighbourhoods, which made the love-feasts lively, spiritual, and interesting.

Having several appointments, coming on in turn in the northern extremity of my district, which required my presence, I hastened on my way to redeem the time which had elapsed by a necessary delay at home. After travelling awhile I discovered that my pocket-book was left, in consequence of other cares. At first I was perplexed with the unlucky occurrence, not knowing how I could travel among strangers without means to bear my incidental expenses. However, after a momentary pause, I concluded to proceed on my journey, trust Providence, and relinquish all my anxiety concerning the matter. So I went on cheerfully, musing on sacred subjects, till a gentleman met me, whom I had seen before in Otsego county; after we had exchanged some ordinary compliments, he immediately inquired, "How do you succeed in obtaining means to

defray your expenses?"—he doubtless had learned the fact that Methodist preachers, at that day, were scantily supplied with earthly comforts. Still, the inquiry being so unusual and unexpected, it truly surprised me; coming from one also who was almost a stranger to me, and introduced rather abruptly withal, made the act appear as the effect of a sudden impulse on his mind, by an invisible agent, to teach me that I must continually trust divine Providence for everything. In replying to the gentleman's question I merely said, that I had been comfortably supplied with means, so far through life: no intimation was given that I had left my pocket-book at home, and hence was moneyless. Without anything further being said, he pressed his hand into mine, leaving therein as much money as I needed on my journey. Immediately, on uttering *farewell*, he rode away and left me. With all these circumstances before me, I did not feel at liberty to reject the favour, because there seemed to be an invisible hand of Providence in it, at the time.

This occurrence is too small a matter to merit notice, considered apart from the circumstances connected with it, which gave to the transaction all its importance and interest. So small things done under the direction, or by the influence of supernatural agency, show clearly that our heavenly Father is not inattentive to the smallest wants of his creatures—even the raven and the sparrow are encircled by providential care. This little incident taught me that in all things, whether great or small, I must trust the Lord, and cast all my care upon him. The case natu-

rally occurred to my mind, that when our Saviour and the apostle Peter were called upon to pay tribute, having no means to meet the demand, Peter, being directed by his Master, cast a hook into the sea, and drew out a fish, in whose mouth he found a piece of money sufficient in value to answer the demand, and nothing over. Then the disciple and his Lord went on their way, and so did I, assured that I was in the service of the same almighty Master; and hence I should always be supplied with means to pay my toll over the bridge of life.

While travelling in the Black River region, I fell in company with a gentleman whose appearance indicated intelligence. He appeared to know to a certainty that I was a Methodist preacher—indeed, everybody, by some means, knew our classification at that day. Our dress and uniform equipage probably betrayed us, if our speech did not. The gentleman was very thoughtful and wordy; and, in our conversation, he abruptly turned upon our class of ministers: "It appears to me," he said, "you are governed by no system; one travels here, another crosses his track there, interfering continually with each other's business." In his view our ministerial movements appeared irregular and ineffectual. I asked him whether he understood our ecclesiastical polity or not. Without hesitation he frankly acknowledged his ignorance of the matter. With due attention, mingled with apparent admiration, he listened while I exhibited, in a brief manner, the great itinerating plan on which we operated; together with the construction of every department of our church government, from the General Conference, through all the

intermediate parts, down to the class meeting; then traced up the scale of executive officers; showed their respective ruling powers, and how they were constituted, and to whom they were responsible.

So I placed before the gentleman's view the harmonious system of Methodism, existing in one connected whole, and all in operation, like a complicated arrangement of machinery, from the centre through every compartment, on to the utmost verge. And no minister, in doing his proper work, interfered with the business and duty of another. Every one had his place, and appropriate work; every part, however small, in this evangelical system, was necessary to complete the whole, as a small pin, or wheel, in a clock, is necessary to form a perfect time-piece. In seeing Methodism as I exhibited it, the gentleman seemed to be confounded, and rode along with me without making any reply to the statements I had made; thinking, probably, how he had thoughtlessly misapprehended our church operations, or thinking whether he had room in his mental garden to plant the grain of knowledge he had so happily found by the wayside.

In reaching the St. Lawrence circuit I had to cross the Black River at Carthage, and travel through a wilderness about forty miles in extent, broken in the middle by a small clearing with two or three log huts, abodes of poverty and seclusion. Accommodations or refreshments I did not expect to find there; so I did not inquire for any. I stopped on my way awhile in the wilderness, and let my horse regale himself on the wild herbage, which grew in abundance along the hu-

mid valleys. While travelling this lonely road I found time for devotion, reflection, and contemplation: all was quiet in this shady solitude, except the busy animals, natives of the wilderness, whose daily employment was to seek a living, which was done in an old-fashioned way, following the customs of their progenitors. Any one armed with deadly weapons could have committed outrages on them easily. But I had no desire to mar their happiness, or to deprive them of their inherited rights. Wantonly to disturb the peaceful economy of nature, by destroying birds and harmless animals, which had never broken human laws, nor trespassed on human rights, was in my view violating the common law of justice, and contrary to the plain dictates of reason.

The consolation which I found at the quarterly meeting, richly compensated me for the toil I endured in travelling through the wilderness. I there discovered that the servants of God had not laboured, suffered, and prayed in vain. Societies were formed in different parts of these new and isolated settlements; and many devout Christians were present at the meeting. In proclaiming the everlasting gospel to them, I was assisted by the Spirit of God, and have reason to believe that good impressions were made on the minds of the attentive audience.

So that joyful season rolled away; and as the sabbath evening came on, it brought a tremendous thunder-storm with it; but being under a superintending Providence, we were protected amidst the agitated elements. The next day, as I was on my return, and near the margin of the before-mentioned wilderness,

while passing a dwelling, where I stopped and imparted some religious advice on my way out, the mistress of the family, seeing me about to pass by, came to the door, apparently in a troubled state of mind, and said, while big tears were rolling down her face, "Sir, do pray for me," and added, "Last evening, during the thunder-storm, I became alarmed, and saw my sinful, wretched condition, exposed to death every hour." I had no time to spare, the wilderness was lying before me, which I had designed to go through that day. So I sat on my horse and preached the words of eternal life to that weeping woman, as our Saviour did to the Samaritan woman; then went on my way. Short speeches are sometimes more effectual than long sermons.

In passing through Jefferson county, I took the opportunity to visit brother Wright, who held a respectable standing as a local preacher in that country. As I came in view of his house, I noticed that the clapboards on one end of the building were in a shattered condition, which I then conceived was the effect of electricity. I found the pious brother at home, who narrated to me the following alarming occurrence, together with his providential escape, which I here relate substantially.

During a late thunder-storm, while the rain was descending violently, Mr. Wright stepped out to the corner of the house to place a receiver under the conductor; while there employed, the lightning struck that end of the building, and, in its descent, shattered the covering, as I had noticed, and struck him, at the same time rent his clothes all into tatters, his boots not

xcepted, and threw him on the ground a rod or more from the place where he had stood; in which condition he lay exposed to the drenching shower, which soon restored him to animation, and to a realizing sense of his situation. His clothes, when the lightning struck him, being soaked by the rain, became a conductor to the electric fluid, which fortunate circumstance, connected with a ruling Providence, saved his life. His tattered apparel was preserved as a memorial to show his friends, that they might know what a dangerous scene he had passed through, and still was saved.

After enduring much fatigue in travelling by night and day, encountering storms, and heat, and cold, to perform my various ministerial duties, I arrived at the termination of this conference year. And, on examination, I found that the trials and labours which I had passed through had not diminished my physical strength, or abated my zeal in the cause of God. To preach the gospel, to direct lost sinners to Christ, and to build up the church, was a delightful and glorious work in my view.

According to previous arrangement, we assembled again at Lyons, June 29, 1815, to hold our annual conference. Though many of our fellow-mortals, in the course of the last year, had fallen by death, and some of our dear friends had left the militant church and gone to the triumphant host above, still our itinerant ranks remained unbroken; we were not called to mourn this year over a deceased fellow-labourer. All appeared happy to meet each other again. Order and friendship reigned in the conference, and all seemed

anxious to advance the interest of the church, and the happiness of each other. In the numerical report of members in all the circuits in our territory, we found that we had gained nine hundred and ninety members. This prosperity in the increase of numbers exceeded our expectations; for we had been greatly annoyed in our religious operations by the civil commotions in the country, and especially throughout the northern part of the conference, along the troubled line, where the elements of ambition and revenge were continually raging. As a natural consequence, the public mind was kept in a state of agitation, and many growing societies were reduced and distracted in these evil days. So the distressing and demoralizing effects and influences growing out of that disastrous war were felt everywhere, and did unavoidably impede the prosperity of our community. Hence, when the proclamation came in, that our national difficulties were settled, it awakened emotions of gratitude and delight in all our hearts; and it was our ardent desire never to see the church or nation troubled again with such needless calamities.

In arranging the appointments, some changes were made on my district: a few were sent to other parts of the work, and others were appointed to fill their places. Among those who came on to Oneida district, Joseph Willis was one. He was constituted by nature to endure hardships, and was very persevering in his habits. He had been in his country's service during the revolutionary war, and near the commencement of the present century his name was enrolled among the gospel pioneers. Being trained in a

school of suffering, he was not terrified at the toils and tribulations connected with our itinerant ministry. After putting his hand to the gospel plough he would not look back. While I am now writing he is living in a valley, a few miles distant, completely superannuated, waiting for a call to go home to his rest above. Benjamin G. Paddock was another, who was then young and ardent, always ready to preach and to sing, well fitted for the meridian of Utica, at that day, in which place he was appointed to labour alone. Elias Bowen came also, and was stationed on Sandy Creek circuit, which then embraced Watertown. Awhile after I returned from conference, I went to Watertown, and stopped at brother Potter's dwelling, a home for the servants of God; and there I had brother Bowen's society, together with the company of brother Wm. Case, who was stationed in Canada at the time, but had come over to see his friends. There, with that Christian family, we had a delicious visit together; there was nothing to disturb the elements of piety, love, and harmony—still the best of all is untold. When we knelt together around the throne of grace, the holy heavens opened, and salvation came down upon us all; and in our rapturous devotion our kindred spirits flowed together like drops of water. So, with the love of God in our hearts, and with mingled affections for each other, we separated, determined so to live and so to die.

At this time the march of Methodism, though meek and unpretending, began to attract more general notice. Some looked on our methodical movements with a jealous eye, fearing the consequences, should we con-

tinue to increase in numbers and influence, and so leaven the community with our peculiar doctrines; while others, equally wise, viewed our religious organization as a blessing, originated by divine Providence, to spread evangelical reformations through the land. The preachers, who were the agents in these operations, were known to be plain, undesigning men, having one business, pursuing their humble, religious course, and leaving the political schemes of the country to be worked and moulded by other minds. It was also obvious to the understanding of discerning men that our system was admirably calculated to enlighten community generally, and especially to carry the gospel to the poor. To every unbiased mind a conditional salvation, equally free to all men, appeared to be in harmony with the Bible, the character of its Author, and the common sense of mankind. Hence so many under our ministry became charmed with the gospel, when they saw it exhibited in its native glory, adapted to every condition, and, by the bequest of its Author, made the common property of a fallen world. Yes, even at that day Methodism had its friends and admirers, though influence and zeal were arrayed in opposition. Our strict practical rules were framed into an objection against the church, by her opposers; besides, her ministers were styled *ignorant* and *enthusiastical;* moreover, the Methodist Church had no *regular ministry*, consequently it would all crumble down soon, and pass away among the things which are unknown. Such plausible insinuations, coming from certain characters, undoubtedly prevented some from uniting with us. Nevertheless, we went on in our old-fashioned

Methodistical way, preaching the truth, and living by rule, and still the people would unite with our societies, because their belief agreed with our doctrines.

The works of the Almighty are all wonderful; hence the Bible, on whose pages Jehovah's acts are registered, abounds with the abstruse and marvellous. Visions, miracles, and angelic ministrations occurred frequently under both the patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations, through the long period of four thousand years. Our Saviour's incarnation was mysterious, and wonders and miracles accompanied him wherever he went: demons, life, death, and the elements, were all under his control. His kingdom was supernatural, and by miracles it was established. The Holy Ghost descended in a wonderful manner on the day of Pentecost, and endowed the apostles with miraculous gifts. This *promised* Comforter came to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"—to dwell on earth with the saints, and to reign in the kingdom of grace, till Christ shall come the second time in the clouds of heaven. The works of the Holy Spirit are acknowledged to be *conviction*, *conversion*, and *sanctification*, which are all miraculous. So a series of supernatural wonders will be continued through succeeding ages, till the consummation of all things. And when the end of the world shall come, then tremendous wonders and miracles will be performed, the elements will be dissolved, the dead will rise, and the judgment scene be opened.

We expect that scoffing infidels will laugh, in their folly, over everything mysterious and miraculous. But it is more surprising that some who acknowledge

the validity of the Bible, and are styled Christians, should openly deny all miracles and supernatural operations, believing that the day of such wonders has passed away—no operations of the Holy Ghost—no angels or evil demons visit the earth now. In fact, it is advancing far toward infidelity, to doubt the abiding presence of a miraculous power under the gospel dispensation. God is omnipresent and unchangeable, and does continually exert his almighty power in accomplishing marvellous things, as circumstances require, according to the order of his moral government; but his ways are unsearchable. The operations and effects attending the Christian religion are obvious to all, but the mode of causation, by which they are produced, lies beyond our reach. This religion being spiritual in its essential character, it necessarily contains many incomprehensible mysteries, which, in some degree, bear the likeness and impress of its incomprehensible Author, proving incontestably thereby its divine origin.

My eldest sister, whose conversion has been noticed, married Mr. J. Blair, and settled in Otsego county, where, through a combination of causes, she lost her health. Though attended by a skilful physician, she continued to decline. Her disease was a vital affection, which carried the symptoms of a pulmonary consumption. Her family and friends were apprehensive that she would never regain her health; though in her enfeebled condition she was able to walk, and occasionally rode out for exercise.

An appointment had been made in that country for a camp meeting, and the time fixed for its commence-

ment was drawing near. Though the place selected for the encampment was more than ten miles distant, still my sister expressed a great anxiety to be present at the meeting; her sickly, debilitated condition was no bar in her way. Her husband and neighbours tried to persuade her to abandon the undertaking; but all in vain—her mind remained fixed to prepare and go. After some hesitation, brother Blair came to the conclusion that he would indulge her in this pious desire, thinking that it might be the last meeting she would enjoy on earth with her pious acquaintance.

So, at the time appointed, with prayer and reliance on the providence of God, she came to the meeting. Though glad to see her on the ground, I was fearful that she had been too adventurous in coming there with a dangerous disease on her vitals. She, however, appeared cheerful, and attended the devotional exercises; and while in a large prayer circle, through the operation of the divine Spirit, she lost her strength, and was raised up and placed in a chair.

Being released awhile from my other duties, I went to see the order and movements in the prayer meeting; and as I approached the crowd I noticed my sister, apparently powerless, as if she were dead, supported in a chair by some female friends, who informed me how she lost her strength. While I stood there, looking upon her death-like countenance, (her eyes being closed,) she spoke out audibly and impressively, saying, "Glory to God, I am healed in body and soul." It evidently appeared that her soul was in an ecstasy; and I concluded that, while in this happy state, she had been carried away so far into spiritual life and bliss,

that she had lost the sensibility of her bodily weakness, and therefore exclaimed, "I am healed in body and soul."

My attention being continually occupied in superintending the meeting, I saw her not again until the next morning, and then I expected to find her greatly debilitated, knowing that she had been exerting her strength in an unusual manner while on the camp ground: but I was happily disappointed. In replying to my inquiries, she said, "I am perfectly well—all the weakness and distress at my vitals is gone." She continued there during the meeting, and returned home happy and in good health; took the lead and management of her business as she did before her sickness. The remedy was so effectual that the disease never returned upon her again. But the simple story of her cure was too miraculous and mysterious for her physician and neighbours to believe; still the evidence of the fact before their eyes was so clear that they could not doubt.

Propitious seasons, marked by joyful occurrences, are often followed by dark, mysterious acts of providence: so the wheel of life revolves. Late in autumn, my eldest son, a sprightly, promising lad, about four years old, after an exposure to the piercing wind, was taken suddenly ill: high inflammatory symptoms were developed in his case. A physician was called in, and, after examination, said his case required a dose of *calomel*, which was accordingly prepared and administered as he directed. In a short time after taking the medicine, the patient was troubled with painful sensations extending from the hip down to his foot,

which was immediately followed by a total loss of muscular power throughout that limb. Then a similar distressing sensibility seized the other leg, which immediately became inactive as the other; and then his right arm was affected in the same manner. So, during the operation of that drastic dose of calomel, the poor child had three limbs so completely palsied that he was unable to move either of them. No other visible effects were produced by the medicine.

On the following morning I made known to the physician the calamity which had fallen upon my family through his injudicious practice,—millions in gold would have been a small compensation for the injury. After hearing my lamentable story, the physician broke out into a loud, affected laugh, and said, with a pitiless tone, "The old *white horse* will do mischief sometimes." White horse was a name he substituted for calomel. This concession, together with his hollow laugh, was all the favour or commiseration I received from him. I had reason to fear that the child would never be able to walk during his natural life. I tried the exercise of journeying, and obtained the advice of eminent physicians, and learned that his recovery would be a gradual work, under the influence of nature's economy. After awhile he regained, in part, the use of his limbs, and began to walk again. But I never expected to see him perfectly restored to health and activity.

Prosperity and adversity checker the map of life, and continually excite intensity of feeling. Shining hopes and gloomy fears accompany mortals here below. Prosperity often comes in the darkest hour, when least expected; and adversity often rushes, un-

noticed, into the sunshine of prosperity. Many events connected with this life, and permitted by divine Providence, appear dark to our understandings now, but we shall know the cause hereafter. Afflictions, when correctly understood, are blessings under cover. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." The deciphering light of eternity will give us a glorious and satisfactory commentary on all the dark chapters in the great book of Providence. Reader, be ready, and patienly wait; the retribution day will surely come.

CHAPTER XI.

General Conference—Bishop Asbury gone—His remains removed—Ceremonies—Thoughts on the end of man—Annual conference—Remarks on camp meetings—Intemperance—The distiller—Great excitement—Copy of a sermon wanted—Meeting in the woods—Conference in Canada—Bishop George—Lost one and gained another—Love-feast—Mr. Le Ray—The criminals—A letter—Coloured man—Term closed.

BEING chosen a delegate to the General Coference, which was appointed to assemble in Baltimore, May 1, 1816, I set out with delightful anticipations; and after enduring some fatigue on the way, I came into Baltimore in due time. There I had the pleasure to meet the delegates from every section of the Methodist community in North America. It was delightful to see in them so much similarity of character, while in their opinions, respecting some things, there was a marked and honest difference. Much useful knowledge was brought together through their representation, from the wide extremes of our country, which was interesting to me, having never been in that school before. This ecclesiastical body being the highest judiciary in the M. E. Church, the principles inherent in its government were there brought out to view; and many important subjects, having a relative bearing on the welfare of the church generally, were canvassed with a piercing eye of intelligence. The wishes of the great community, there represented, were taken under consideration, and every part of the economy and practice of the church critically reviewed; debatable

matters patiently argued, and, by the process of logical friction, truth and light were elicited. So, in the course of the session, the conference settled some exciting questions, and adopted many weighty resolutions.

Though we were pleasantly situated in a noted city, surrounded with social friends, who had warm hearts and liberal hands, still our spirits were sad; a gloomy vacancy attended the conference. Bishop Asbury was not there. That venerable pioneer of Methodism in America, who had been all along a Moses amidst the tribes of our Israel, going in and out before us, was absent: he had long occupied a position peculiar and alone, by which all the preachers held the filial relation of sons. To that distinguished, holy man, the eye of the church had been long directed in prosperity and in troubles, for wisdom and counsel. He was a moving, ruling oracle, whom we had been accustomed to see in the chair of our conferences; and on whose sanctimonious countenance each eye had rested with delight, while every ear waited to catch the impressive words which fell from his lips.

A few weeks before the sitting of the conference, Bishop Asbury and brother Bond, his travelling companion, were passing through Virginia on their way to Baltimore; and, when about one hundred miles from the city, they stopped at the residence of an old friend to rest, and while there, this venerable man, being overpowered by fatigue and infirmity, sunk into the sleep of death. The closing scene was fraught with peace and triumph; and his remains were deposited in a family cemetery belonging to Mr. G. Arnold, at whose house he died.

The delegates in conference assembled, being desirous to show some formal respect to the memory of their deceased leader and bishop, directed, in accordance with the earnest wishes of his numerous mourning friends in Baltimore, that his remains should be removed to that city, and a vault made ready for their reception under the church in Eutaw-street. According to this order of conference, certain deputed friends, accompanying a hearse, went to the distant sepulchre, and brought the bishop's remains into the city, where, on a day appointed, pursuant to arrangement, the formal obsequies were performed. The municipal officers, the clergy, and citizens, without distinction, were invited to unite with the members of the General Conference in the mournful and solemn procession. The affecting occasion excited the public mind, and aroused the feelings of thousands to come and sympathize with us. The scene connected with that memorable day was truly imposing: the whole city appeared to be in motion. I was informed that the procession was a mile in length; besides the multitudes accompanying us along the walks. While moving slowly forward we had time for melancholy musings, thinking that those hands which were placed on our heads when we were consecrated to the ministerial office, were then cold and motionless in the coffin; and those lips which pronounced the impressive words of the ceremony, were then sealed up by the paralyzing touch of death. Affecting scene!—there the whole Methodist Episcopal Church in North America, in her representative character, was following her lamented bishop to the tomb. When we came in view of the church where

the vault was prepared, it was filled with a waiting audience; and the spacious yard was crowded also; through which a passage was opened for the procession to pass in to the vault; where in a few minutes the coffin, with its honoured contents, was placed, and left to rest in silence and solitude. Immediately after, Bishop M'Kendree entered the desk of the church, and delivered a solemn discourse adapted to the occasion.

On the succeeding sabbath, according to previous notice, a sermon was preached in all the Methodist churches in the city, in commemoration of the bereavement the church had suffered in losing her aged superintendent. These peculiar exercises made that sabbath a solemn and interesting season to many. A multitude belonging to the Methodist communion came in from the country, and mingled their devotions and sympathies with ours. The loss which the church had sustained was a public loss; for he was known all over the United States, having spent almost half a century in traversing this extensive continent; and the great Methodist family, by his death, was bereaved of its spiritual father, and cast into the shadow of mourning throughout the country.

During my stay in Baltimore, I occasionally rambled through the city and its suburbs, in different directions, for exercise and amusement. One day in my walk I noticed on the outer part of the city a number of carmen employed in removing a hill. I soon perceived that the eminence which they were levelling had been long sacred to the dead: it was an ancient cemetery. Along the bank, where the carmen were at work, dark spots

appeared, which alone designated many of the graves from the low ground where I stood. Coffins and the bodies were mostly dissolved by the decomposing laws of nature. But the merry carmen, whenever they found pieces of coffins or bones, which occurred frequently, cast them aside into a pile. I said nothing to the labourers, but stood a few rods from them contemplating on the scene which lay before me. In my soliloquy I said, This is the end of mortal man; here dust is commingled with dust; the polished and vulgar, wealthy and indigent, wise and simple, are all alike. So death brings all ranks of men down upon one level in gloomy dust. The pompous monumental marble, which keeps up a distinction to the living eye, may flatter, but it is in vain. A century ago, or less, these mouldered forms were living, adorned with cheerful countenances, moving with activity along the busy streets, delighted with their earthly possessions, and esteemed by their social friends. Lo, now they are unknown and forgotten by all on earth! The hungry worms have devoured their pampered forms; and now the darkened soil only tells the inquirer what they are, leaving all to imagine what they have been. The gay multitude which are now skipping along on the earth's upper crust through busy streets, flaunting in gaudy attire, together with the haughty lordlings, labourers, crouching slaves, and crippled beggars, will soon be consigned to death's cold, silent caverns, and be forgotten likewise, by the generations which will succeed them. O, what is life!—a vapour. So I thought, and went on my way.

After a session of about four weeks, the General

Conference adjourned; and then in haste I left the city and returned home, having only time to go round my district once before the meeting of our annual conference, which session was appointed to be held in Sauquoit, the place where I resided. At length the day arrived, and the preachers came in from every section of our work, bringing good news from their several fields of labour. Peace and harmony prevailed in the conference. Some of the sermons delivered on the occasion were happy specimens of evangelical preaching, glowing, melting, and full of divine power. The prayer meetings, also, were attended with unearthly glory and blessedness. The pious people in the neighbourhood enjoyed, with the preachers, the abundant showers of grace accompanying the exercises, which richly compensated them for all their toil and care. Immediately after the conference adjourned, the preachers went to their appointed posts, and with renewed courage commenced their labours.

In those days, as before stated, our quarterly meetings were seasons of remarkable interest; but our camp meetings presented more powerful attractions. These meetings occurred not so frequently, besides, they continued much longer, and were often attended with wonderful consequences, which awakened public curiosity, and brought thousands to the tented wilderness. Observing, from time to time, the desirable and lasting effects, springing from the combined and continued efforts on these occasions, induced me to believe that the camp-meeting project was originated by divine Providence to give a mighty impulse to religious revi-

vals, and so produce amazing changes in the moral world.

In my contemplations on this subject I was carried back to ancient times, when Moses, by Jehovah's appointment, came down to Egypt and requested Pharaoh, the prince of the Nile, to let the enslaved Israelites go out with him into the wilderness to hold a camp meeting. Being a haughty, cruel tyrant, very covetous too, and withal an enemy to camp meetings, Pharaoh refused to let the people go with him—perhaps he thought it would be imprudent for the people to lodge in tents, or that such an undertaking was not necessary. But more likely he thought that their labour was too important to his royal interest to be relinquished; for he was in a great hurry building cities, and pompous pyramids; and he wanted the tribes of Israel to mould brick. At length, however, they left the cruel tyrant and his brick-yards, and went away with Moses; and the Lord went with them in a cloudy pillar, illuminating the encampment by his glorious presence, and blessing them with wonderful providences and miracles along the way. So after living in the wilderness forty years they closed their camp meeting, and went on to their farms, in Canaan, which the Lord had given to them by a changeless promise.

Furthermore, in my meditations I was led to consider the promise of the Lord spoken by Isaiah, xli, 15, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth: thou shalt

thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." This prophetic promise, I clearly saw, referred to the same events which were revealed in the closing part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. ii, 34, 35, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Daniel moreover stated, in his interpretation of the dream, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

The "*kingdom*" mentioned by Daniel is undoubtedly the kingdom of grace, or, in other words, the gospel dispensation; and the "*new sharp threshing instrument having teeth,*" in the quotation from Isaiah, refers to the gospel, appropriately; by which mighty engine "*the God of heaven*" will subdue the world; and bring all nations under his control, and set up a kingdom which shall fill *the whole earth.* This *threshing instrument* is called *new*, because it belongs under the new covenant; it is called *sharp*, because it is full of *spirit* and *life;* and in it are set the sharp, cutting *teeth* of the moral law. The preachers are the agents employed to move this powerful instrument. And then

I clearly saw that the camp ground was the place designed, by divine Providence, for the *threshing-floor*, where the preachers, endowed with power from above, operated on the mingled crowd, by this new and complicated engine. When in operation it not only produced a sound, but wonderful emotions, with weeping and trembling often accompanying it. So the mountains were threshed, and the chaff of sin and error scattered to the winds of heaven by the breath of the Almighty.

This *threshing instrument* was constructed by Jehovah himself, and is perfect in every part, admirably calculated to humble, subdue, and renovate the moral world. But artful, earthly-minded men have attempted to improve on the design of God, by impiously connecting, and gearing on to it the jarring wheels of civil policy, thinking that the additional contrivance would make it operate more effectually. But experience has demonstrated that whenever it has been done, the appendage of worldly policy has invariably obstructed its operation, by blocking its spiritual wheels, casting off its moral belts, and dulling and bending its teeth, so that the machine cannot accomplish the end for which it was designed. Whenever church and state become united, the church degenerates and sinks back upon the low level of the carnal world, despoiled of all her spiritual life, glory, power, zeal, and usefulness. Hence, Lorenzo Dow said, "Let every *tub* stand upon its own bottom, whether it be *ash*, or *pine*, or *oak*."

Intemperance, which was everywhere prevalent at that day, was a great hinderance to the reception and triumph of the gospel. Though a ruinous and dis-

graceful evil to drink stimulating liquors habitually, still it had been a practice of long standing; and was authorized by fashion and custom in every class in community. So, under the influence of perverted views and habits, the world went on encouraging the evil without stopping to consider the fatal consequences. Though our church bound her members by a practical rule to abstain from the use of ardent spirits as a drink, nevertheless, the ruling custom in every-day business being to pass the intoxicating cup from hand to hand, the members of our communion were unavoidably exposed to the tempting evil, and, as a natural consequence, intemperate habits crept into our societies, which caused some promising members to lose their piety and standing among us.

In that day, the views entertained by the public mind respecting the use of alcoholic drinks, made it inglorious work for a minister of the gospel to speak against the common tippling practice in a public discourse. Nevertheless, my vows to God, together with the dictates of my conscience, would not excuse me from performing the unpopular task. Therefore I improved the opportunity, when addressing large assemblies, to portray the alarming evil of intemperance; and also brought out the thundering moral law to bear against the ungodly practice.

While superintending a camp meeting on Otsego circuit my spirit was moved within me, seeing the wickedness of the land. The hateful *genius* of intemperance appeared couching in obvious places on the environs of the encampment, grinning at us as we passed along. On the sabbath, when my turn came

to preach, I appeared before the multitude with my brow set against wickedness—alcoholic wickedness in particular. Being authorized by my text to bring arguments against the prevailing sin of intemperance, I had no mercy to show to the evil in any of its branches. I shook the rod of truth over the *distillery*—the *rum-shop*, and the intoxicating *fluid* as it ran down the drunkard's neck. It was plain, pointed work: every sentence went like a bullet to the mark. Knowing that truth and reason were on my side, I was not anxious about the judgment of men. While standing in the presence of God, proclaiming his solemn truth, I was far above the scorn of the impious world.

Soon after the discourse was ended, I learned that there was a man on the camp ground who owned a distillery; and only a few weeks before, in a revival of religion, he was numbered among the converts, but had not united with the church. During the discourse, the preachers, and some others, heard my pointed remarks with much anxiety and trembling, on account of the converted distiller, fearing the attack I made on his whiskey business would destroy his religion, and hence the church would lose him for ever—his talents and influence having awakened much interest in his favour. Immediately after the exercise was closed, the preachers and other friends gathered around him in a pious panic, anxious to heal his wounds, and comfort his afflicted mind. Among other things they said, "Brother Giles did not mean you, personally,—he does not know you, nor what business you are engaged in:"—all very true,—they hoped that he would not be disturbed by the discourse. The distiller stood and

heard them calmly and attentively for a few minutes, and then, in this manner replied: "Brethren, what do you mean?—if that man has preached the truth, I am glad that I was present to hear it," &c. The gentleman appeared to be a sincere Christian; anxious to know the whole truth, and determined to do his duty as it was revealed to him.

The brethren, who manifested so much anxiety over this young convert, were temperance men themselves. They were only afraid that the tremendously strong meat I carved for the assembly at that time would destroy him—being only a babe in religion. But when they saw that he would live through the operation, they were very glad, and, indeed, we were all glad. And the distiller afterward showed to all around how religiously glad he was. Influenced by the power of truth and holy feelings, he returned home from the meeting and never run his distillery another day; nor did he sell it to any one to work mischief in the neighbourhood; but he let it go down—yes, brother Badger let his distillery rot down. I saw it afterward in a harmless pile of ruins; and rejoiced to see it in that condition. The pious brother joined the Methodist Church soon afterward, in whose communion he remained a useful and distinguished member till the day of his death.

During a part of the exercises at a quarterly meeting, held in Westmoreland, there was no uncommon excitement; everything was done calmly, and in perfect order, which was very pleasing to certain leading characters in that society. They were accustomed to pronounce *Amen* softly, in their hearts; and kept themselves very

quiet in the congregation. They did not like to see extraordinary excitements, nor hear loud *Amens* or acclamations in the house of God. The love-feast as usual was attended with joy, and some spiritual animation; at the close of which the sacrament was administered. During that exercise, a certain lady came forward, expressing a desire to unite with us in the holy communion, stating at the same time that she was not a member of the Methodist society, and that her opinions respecting the divinity of Jesus Christ did not agree with the opinions of many on that subject. It evidently appeared from her own statements that she was an Arian in her doctrinal views. Not feeling authorized to give my approval to such heretical doctrines by an act of cordial fellowship, I did not admit her to the communion table—the question was soon settled, and the service went on.

The eucharistic ceremony being ended, we all knelt down to offer up the closing prayer. As I began my address to the throne of Heaven, the before-mentioned Arian woman came into remembrance, and I prayed for her, personally, that she might be delivered from error, and be brought into the truth; that she might behold the glorious character of her Redeemer, who is "*the true God—the mighty God—the Lord from heaven—the Creator of all things.*" Instantly, as I was speaking, a supernatural impulse was felt throughout the assembly. It seemed that heaven opened above, and the awful presence of God was there and filled the house with glory. The devout worshippers appeared to be carried away involuntarily with the swelling emotions of the moment; and, as if compelled

by an invisible power, they all began to pray aloud; and my voice was soon lost in the mingled cries of the multitude.

This exercise continued about one hour without any intermission. As it commenced without any notice, so there was no sign by which I could decide when the excitement would cease. It was altogether undesigned and unexpected; and therefore not "got up," as it is believed some excitements are—there was nothing mechanical in its cause. A supernatural impulse fell upon the people; we all felt it, and knew that it was the work of the Lord. So I did not lift my hand to steady the ark, or try to stop the people from praying. Even opposers to noisy exercises said nothing against that wonderful work of God. Indeed, the occurrence was new and surprising to me. The hour appointed for preaching had arrived and passed by; and it did not appear that there would be any opportunity for preaching that afternoon. At length, however, the solemn sound in the concert of prayer began to sink into a dying cadence, and then suddenly came to a close. Immediately afterward I entered the desk, and preached under the influence of divine power.

On ordinary occasions, for a number to pray together, vocally, appeared improper, and I was not inclined to give my approbation to the practice. Nevertheless, I was convinced that we should never attempt to set bounds to the operations of the Holy Spirit. God sometimes works in a mysterious and powerful manner, which often surprises and confounds us. That which would be deemed disorder, under some circumstances, might be correct and proper un-

der other circumstances. Whatever God does is done right, and let all the people say, Amen.

On a special occasion I attempted to preach on the following text:—"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord," Jer. ix, 23, 24. Immediately after the benediction was pronounced, I observed a young man, a stranger, making his way directly toward me; and as he came up to make known his request, I noticed a becoming modesty and earnestness depicted in his honest, cheerful countenance. But I was much surprised when I learned that he wished to obtain a copy of the discourse which I had been delivering that day; adding that he would compensate me for the favour. I told him that the discourse was not written, and besides, my attention was so occupied with the duties connected with my charge, that I had no time to write sermons. After hearing my remarks, the young man appeared to hesitate, and show plainly that he was disappointed. I then wished him to tell me the reason why he was so anxious to obtain a copy of the sermon —in my view it was only an ordinary production, and I did not suppose that any one was very much charmed with it: but he gave me the reason in replying, thus: "Why, the Lord converted my soul while you was preaching, and I want the sermon to peruse and keep as a memorial of this happy day." The youth

appeared so sincere and urgent in his request, that I could do no less than promise that I would write out the discourse for him as soon as I conveniently could, and as near like the original as my recollection could give it. Accordingly a copy was prepared, and afterward published, for the gratification of the young man, and for the benefit of others.

On a memorable occasion I attempted to expound the following text to a large congregation assembled in the woods :—" And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev. xxii, 1, 2.

In the introduction I briefly remarked that this scene opened in the spiritual Jerusalem, the second paradise. Man forfeited his life and happiness in the first paradise by transgression ; hence he was kept away from the tree of life, which interdiction made him mortal. In the second paradise, which was designed for fallen man, there appears a river of life proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, the two divine persons on one throne, showing equality in honour, power, and glory. The river of life represents the free and abundant grace of God to refresh and cleanse believing, sinful mortals. And on either side of the river was the tree of life—another emblem of saving grace, bearing various kinds of fruit, and yielding continually ; and the leaves possessed a healing power to renovate the nations—strikingly characteristic of the Bible, whose

sacred leaves are filled with balmy promises and living doctrines. The depravity of human nature—the universality of the atonement—the free presentation of grace to all mankind—the immortal felicity prepared for the saints above:—these doctrines being suggested by the text, were taken under consideration, where thought had room to range.

As I was bringing my discourse to a close, it seemed that the river of life, which makes glad the city of God, poured down from above, and fell upon the thirsty congregation, while the branches of the *tree of life*, loaded with fruit, hung over us, and dropped their balmy productions into the glad hearts of the people. As soon as I had taken my seat, a certain man, known by his neighbours to be inclining toward infidelity, arose and mounted a log in the midst of the assembly, and spoke out with a strong voice, saying, "If what we have been hearing to-day be Methodist doctrine, I am a Methodist;" and immediately, without giving any explanatory remarks, stepped down and resumed his seat. The occurrence, being so unexpected, and coming from a supposed enemy, too, produced a momentary excitement in the assembly. What course the man pursued afterward is unknown to me; so I must leave him and pass on.

This year, with all its toils and cares, soon rolled away, and left us to reflect on the past, hoping for brighter days to come. So, with undiminished zeal and courage, we hastened on our way to gain the place appointed in time for the commencement of our annual conference. Though our territory was large, we soon found ourselves happily associated in a

deliberative body, on the Canadian shore, where we were kindly received, and hospitably entertained. True religion is the offspring of Heaven, everywhere the same, always producing friendship and benevolence wherever it exists. If all mankind were truly converted and born of the Spirit, there would be no enemies in the world: all nations would form but one great family of brethren. Sin is the fruitful source of wars and animosities. Holiness, which is true Christianity, produces kindness, love, and harmony,—who then is truly happy? The Christian.

At this conference Bishop George preached; and I wish I could give the reader his sermon with all its beauty, power, and eloquence; but it is beyond my reach. Near the close, as he was bringing the strong points in his discourse together, that their united strength might impress the assembly effectually, he produced a climax the most sublime and thrilling that I ever heard. He ascended from thought to thought in his towering theme, like an eagle soaring and wending up the distant sky. I heard with admiration, and almost trembled to see him rising to such fearful eminence. Several times I imagined that he could go no higher; but he would suddenly disappoint me. At the very point where expectation fixed his return, he seemed to inhale new fire, and soared away on the wing of thought again; then higher, and higher still; till it seemed that his inspiration would become his chariot, and, by the grasp he held on the enchained assembly, would take us all away with him to the third heaven. Some of the hearers appeared motionless as statues, absorbed in thought, and charmed with the grand ideal scene

before them, while strong emotions were rolling in waves through the excited congregation; and as the man of God was about to descend from his lofty elevation, thrilling shrieks burst out from the awakened crowd in the gallery. Immediately some of the preachers, who were acquainted there, pressed through the multitude to conduct these sighing penitents down to the altar; and soon they were seen weeping, and trembling, and urging their way along to the consecrated spot, where a prayer meeting was immediately opened, and ardent supplications offered up to Heaven in their behalf. The time was well improved, and it was a season of great power and glory. Some I believe found the great salvation before the exercise was closed. It is believed that more than one hundred souls were awakened during the session of that conference. (See William Case's Letter, Methodist Magazine, vol. ii.)

After the business of conference was ended, we left our kind friends in Canada, and returned home to our work. We had no time to spend in idleness, if such an indulgence had been desirable. Indeed, Methodism enjoins diligence and activity, both in the improvement of time and talents; everything must be done by rule, and everything kept in perfect order. As ministers of Christ, we were not masters, but servants—servants to Jesus Christ, who had bought us with his own blood, and servants to the church, in whose bosom we had been kindly fostered, having this obligation continually resting upon us: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x, 31.

Brother Dempster, who was admitted into our itinerant ranks the preceding conference, was, according to my wishes, appointed to labour this year in Sauquoit station, where I held my residence. This young man, in the year 1812, came to a camp meeting on Herkimer circuit, unconverted, and probably not much concerned about his soul's salvation. He was a stranger among strangers; but I noticed the youth in the former part of the meeting at different times. He appeared quite sedate and reserved, marking attentively the movements on the ground. His views and feelings, however, at that time, were unknown to me.

At the time of this camp meeting, Luther Bishop and William B. Lacy were on Herkimer circuit together. Mr. Lacy was a talented man, and had been useful in the church as a popular preacher; but, unfortunately, everybody did not please him, and he did not please everybody; and, as a natural consequence, there arose some jealousies and heart-burnings, which probably had an unhappy influence on his aspiring mind. Besides, our low salaries gave him the horrors; and the old-fashioned Methodistical measures had lost their power to please. So he became disaffected, and formed a resolution to leave us, and seek another home—though the Methodist Episcopal Church had been his spiritual foster mother.

Mr. Lacy had been on the circuit but a few weeks before the commencement of the camp meeting; during that time he had been growing more and more uneasy, till at length his resolution gained the settled point to leave us there at the meeting. So, according to his purpose, on a certain day, I saw him crossing

the ground toward the public gate, actually leaving the consecrated place—ay, leaving the whole Methodist Church also. As he came near me, with an air of coolness and independence, he looked up and surveyed the clouds from the east, around to the west, and said, with a pleasant meaning tone, "There are some indications of rain, and I think you will all do well to decamp." He then went on his way, and soon his movements carried him from our view, away from our leafy temple, and away from the fostering arms of the church.

After Mr. Lacy was gone, the devotional exercises progressed with life and activity, as if we had suffered no loss. We were truly happy and at home in our encampment. The Lord controlled the wind and clouds, so that we suffered no harm from the elements. The preachers proclaimed the gospel with zeal and power, and the pious people prayed and sung anthems of praise in the resounding forest. The power of God was visible in its operation among the people; some wandering souls were reclaimed, and other miracles of grace were performed: yes, I have the pleasure to state that John Dempster was converted there. And, by that happy occurrence, the church gained another star to occupy a place in the bright constellation of sacred lights. So, after all, we were greatly comforted, for we had fortunately gained more at the camp meeting than we had lost. We therefore left the sacred ground, rejoicing in our prosperity, richly compensated for all our toil and care.

On a memorable period, Watertown had been favoured with a glorious reformation, and a number of distin-

guished villagers were among the converts. They were spiritually-minded, sincere disciples, delighted with class meetings and love-feasts; but, for reasons well known to themselves, they had not proposed to unite with the society. They were in the practice, however, of attending the public means of grace with the Methodist society, where they appeared to be happy, and at home. So they remained when I came there to superintend a quarterly meeting, which, in the absence of an appropriate house for worship, was held in a spacious court-room.

On sabbath morning the preacher, as usual, stood at the door to admit the members and others, according to our rule, into the love-feast. These converts, who had not united with the society, but had often enjoyed these privileges, came there also to be admitted. The preacher, understanding their position, endeavoured to bring their minds to a decisive point, and asked them whether they would join the society the first opportunity, if they should be admitted into the love-feast. They readily gave him an assurance that they would. So they were admitted. After the door was closed, and the time had arrived to open the love-feast, the preacher said to me, "I wish you to wait a few minutes." He then arose, and announced to the congregation that he would improve the present opportunity to take the names of all who were wishing to be admitted into the church. Immediately all those who had given a pledge at the door arose, and gave in their names; which decisive act contributed much to their spiritual prosperity afterward.

The exercise was then opened in form—indeed, the

love-feast, on that day, was conducted strictly according to form, and it was full of spiritual life: love, liberty, peace, joy, and divine power, abounded there. Though the room was constructed for judicial purposes, nevertheless, on that day, mercy and grace took possession of it, and reigned there among the devoted children of God.

At another quarterly meeting, which was held in the same court-room, the glorious presence of God, like a pillar of cloud, filled the place and overpowered the assembly, so that some fell, others trembled, and many rejoiced. In the midst of this amazing scene, a gentleman seized the hand of his daughter, and, with mingled emotions, fled from the excited crowd, leaving his happy, pious wife, behind, to take care of herself. The operations of the Holy Spirit were so powerful on the minds and bodies of the audience, that some verily believed, and afterward said, that the building shook on its foundation.

In years elapsed, when political commotions were rife in France, a gentleman of rank and fortune came to America, and purchased a large tract of land in the Black River country; and the township where he established his residence is known by his proper name, Le Ray. This gentleman appeared to be well accomplished, erudite, and companionable—in religion a Catholic; but reasonable and liberal. In going everywhere to preach, the Methodist ministers went into that town also, and formed a society, which was in a prosperous condition; but they had no convenient place for worship. Being informed that Mr. Le Ray had intimated that he would assist the society in erecting

a church not far from his residence, and wishing to afford them my influence, I therefore sent a notice to Mr. Le Ray, that I would wait on him, at a specified time, in behalf of the society, to consult on the ways and measures to be adopted to build a house for divine worship; and likewise gave notice to the society that I would preach in the neighbourhood, in the afternoon, on the same day.

Accordingly, on the day appointed I arrived in due time at Mr. Le Ray's mansion, where some formalities were introduced to show that I was expected there—the attendants inquired whether Mr. Giles had arrived. His lordship answered them in the affirmative. Being known by the distinguishing epithet, *presiding elder*, doubtless led Mr. Le Ray to imagine that, in virtue of my office, I was some consequential dignitary—he was not acquainted with the unpretending *orders* in the Methodist Church. Indeed, I was politely received there, and treated with as much attention as if I had been a duke. While we were pleasantly seated, and passing on from subject to subject, in colloquial conversation, the post came in, bringing letters to Mr. Le Ray, from several renowned personages: one was from ex-president John Adams: I was requested to look at his autograph, which clearly indicated that the last moving sand, in life's transient glass, was running out—so all must go. Rank, fortune, friends, renown, all united cannot save frail man from decay.

Mr. Le Ray's mansion was modelled after the French style—in its location secluded and romantic. Groves of nature's planting stood at a respectful distance, as

their lord directed, and imbowered his spacious park, where the domesticated deer bounded in sport, and enjoyed a local, quiet life. The situation of the garden was beautiful, the hot-house likewise, where vegetation flourished, and spread its gaudy blooms, laughing at the frigid storms without—it was winter when I was there. In a spacious hall stood a costly billiard table: though it was neatly made, and highly polished, it did not appear, in my inquisitive eye, as a very pious piece of furniture.

The hour appointed for preaching was drawing near, so I introduced the object of my visit, by briefly stating that the Methodist society, in that town, had no convenient house for worship; and they were anxious to have one erected, as their number was increasing, but means were wanting, and, in their extremity, they were induced, through my agency, to call upon Mr. Le Ray for assistance. The gentleman was very prompt to express his willingness to aid them in their moral enterprise. He commended the society, particularly for their morality, and thought that they merited encouragement. Moreover, he said he wished the church to be located about one mile from his residence, where a village was then growing up; and added, that he would give a building lot, and furnish all the materials necessary for the construction of the house, leaving the society without any expense or burden, except putting the building up, which, in his opinion, they were able to do. This proposal exceeded my expectations, and everything was going well.

When the time arrived to attend divine service, a sleigh, having four horses attached to it, was driven up

to the door: at Mr. Le Ray's request I took a seat with him, and we rode on about one mile to the place of worship. The room designated for the meeting was in the upper story of a large dwelling house which was unfinished, and without partitions. The people were gathering as we came in; so we waited awhile in a room below, which was occupied by the master of the house. The time being come to begin the exercise, we went up, and found the spacious apartment filled with a large assembly. On one side of the room two chairs were standing, which were provided for Mr. Le Ray and myself—probably he never attended a Methodist meeting before. He carefully watched every movement, and politely conformed to every part of the devotional exercise. I felt at home in the congregation, and enjoyed much light and liberty in speaking. According to my design, I took the freedom which the subject selected for the occasion gave me, to arouse a spirit of enterprise in the congregation, to move them to go to work and build a house for divine service.

The exercise being closed, Mr. Le Ray and myself walked out of the room together; in going down he passed by me on the stairs, and, as we reached the hall, he turned round and grasped my hand in both of his, shaking it at the same time expressively, saying, "That is right—warm them up, warm them up!"—a pleasant complimentary allusion to what he had been hearing. While we were returning from the meeting, he made some remarks on the comparative powers and attributes of the French and English languages, which in substance were as follows:—"The English far

excels the French for the purposes of preaching, and for declamatory discourses. It is so *profuse* that a thought can be presented in one position, then in another, and by being viewed through different mediums of illustration, the idea becomes deeply impressed on the hearer's mind. But the French is more *persuasive* than the English, better adapted to argumentation, a strong and forcible language to meet a violent antagonist." So, while pleasantly engaged in conversation, we found ourselves at the door of the mansion. But, in consequence of other engagements, I could not protract my stay there any longer; so I left my worthy friend, and went on my way, well pleased with my visit, and the generous propositions obtained to aid the society.

In the following autumn we held a camp meeting in that region, a number of miles from Mr. Le Ray's residence, which appeared to begin in the spirit of devotion, and we were not disappointed, for it ended with joy and salvation. After the meeting was brought to a close, I retired to the residence of a friend a short distance from the consecrated spot. While the people were all in motion on the camp ground, in the act of leaving or preparing to leave, Mr. Le Ray came upon the ground and inquired for me—he had learned that the title, *brother*, was a common, friendly appellation among us—therefore in his inquiry he called me *brother Giles*, undoubtedly thinking that the social term used by us would be more complimentary and pleasing to the people than any other, and so it was; they were much amused to hear him pronounce the kindly word, believing that it was the result of his politeness.

After being informed where I had retired, he came immediately down to see me, and while there he expressed some regret that he had not come to the meeting before—probably he had never been at such a strange place of devotion, and came there as many others did, merely to satisfy a common curiosity; to hear what would be said, and see what would be done. He said, "that as he was coming on toward the encampment, he met wagons loaded with people returning home, singing and rejoicing along the road, apparently pleased with what they had heard, and satisfied with what they had done."

The following letter was originally addressed to the editors of the Methodist Magazine, and was published in the second volume of that work:—

Rome, March 2, 1817.

DEAR BRETHREN,—At a circuit court in Oneida county, six criminals were convicted and sentenced to undergo hard labour and confinement in state-prison. After their trial, they were committed to jail, and while there confined they set fire to the prison; but, providentially, it was discovered and extinguished before it had progressed far. The unfortunate criminals, however, suffered considerably on account of the smoke, which completely filled their apartment; and on opening the prison doors, it appeared that some of the prisoners were in a state of suffocation, but by being brought to the air they all revived, except one, who was too far gone to be resuscitated. The surviving criminals were again brought to trial, and, for the crime of setting fire to the jail, were all doomed to expire on

the gallows. February 15th, 1817, was the day appointed for their execution.

The preachers on the circuit, together with several other pious persons in the village, felt a deep concern for these poor condemned criminals; and hence they availed themselves of every proper opportunity to visit their abode, with a design to impart to them some religious instruction, and make devout supplications in their behalf. Soon it was discovered that their labour was not in vain; the solemn confessions, tears, and prayers, which were excited by their visits, inclined them to believe that the Spirit of God had entered the gloomy dungeon, and was about to work a miracle of grace, and save their guilty souls. After suffering some time under a sense of their numerous transgressions against the law of God, some of them obtained the evidence that their sins were remitted through the atonement of Christ. Though they were criminals, they were not greater sinners than the thief on the cross, who, by confession, repentance, faith, and prayer, obtained mercy and forgiveness in his dying agony.

Harris was one of the first among their number that experienced a change of heart. Having greater gifts, and more confidence than the others, he became their chief speaker when conversation was introduced among them, and went forward in morning and evening prayer, which exercise they were allowed to perform in a vocal manner. Curiosity induced many, occasionally, to stop before the prison door to hear them while in their devotions. The voice of supplication uttered by beings under the sentence of an ignominious death,

and issuing, too, from a gloomy dungeon, gave to prayer a strange, impressive power, and a more than ordinarily solemn tone, which was often too affecting to be heard without weeping.

So the work of grace progressed among them till they all professed to enjoy the great salvation; and those who became personally acquainted with them were fully convinced that they were sincere, and their conversion genuine. Pious persons, who could converse on free salvation and experimental religion, they were always happy to see. Indeed, religion was the only subject they wished to converse upon. They spent much of their time in reading, praying, and singing, —they often sung some of their spiritual songs with so much animation that the prison walls rang with their joyful notes. They were permitted to attend divine worship in the court-room, on several sabbath days, where, before the listening multitude, they related the wonderful blessings which they had experienced. They were also permitted to receive the ordinance of baptism. Immersion being the mode chosen by them, they were taken from the dungeon, disburdened of their irons, and conveyed to a river not far off, and solemnly baptized in the name of the holy Trinity, and then confined again in their dreary abode.

The time appointed for their execution was drawing near, which ideal scene deeply affected my mind; and being called to Rome at that time to officiate at a quarterly meeting, I was resolved to improve the opportunity to visit the prisoners. A short time before, the sheriff had concluded not to bring the prisoners out of their cells again till the day assigned for execution:

they, however, expressed an ardent desire to receive the sacrament before they left the world. So after the quarterly meeting was closed, which was held in the court-room, and liberty being granted by the sheriff, I proceeded with the consecrated elements, in company with a number of devout brethren, to the prison; and, while the *keeper* was unlocking the door, we had time to think on our solemn business there; but the opening of the door called our attention, and we all went in—the gloominess of the prison, and the sight of human beings with pale, ghastly countenances, together with the sound of their clanking irons, affected our hearts, and awakened strange emotions that could not be described.

The prisoners were glad, and rejoiced to see us there. Though their condition was very gloomy, they, nevertheless, appeared composed and happy. I examined them closely respecting their faith in Christ, and change of heart; they all seemed to understand the plan of salvation, and the nature of experimental religion. They expressed the feelings and views of real Christians; and I gained sufficient evidence to believe that they were in spirit renovated, and had become new creatures. I explained to them the nature and design of the holy sacrament, to which they gave a strict attention—to administer that ordinance was my solemn business there.

The consecrated elements were then exposed to the view of all; but never did I behold the sacramental table of the Lord spread in a prison before. This passage, which our Saviour read on the sabbath-day out of the book of Isaiah, came into remembrance:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." I felt thankful that a Saviour was provided for a fallen world; and that he tasted death for every man. Good news indeed, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—O, let creation shout for joy! How wonderful, that the God of salvation should honour such abodes as these with his presence, and bestow his forgiving love on such flagrant sinners! It is Jehovah's plan and work, but it is marvellous in our eyes.

After a devotional hymn was sung, and prayers offered to God, I proceeded to administer the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ to these disciples in chains, who upon the bended knee received them with apparent reverence and gratitude. After the exercise was closed, and we were about to depart, the *keeper* requested the prisoners to sing us a farewell hymn, which they accordingly did with much zeal and devotion. Then, under the gloomy apprehension that we should never see them again in time, unless on the day of their execution, we commended them to God, and bid them all a final adieu.

Many in community became deeply affected on account of the situation of these prisoners, knowing their penitence and sincerity. Though their sentence was legal and just, they were unwilling that they should be executed. Therefore petitions were immediately sent to the governor, entreating him to grant them a reprieve; and, accordingly, their fate was changed

from the sentence of death to hard labour and confinement in state-prison for life. When this intelligence reached the ears of the prisoners, though they knew it was designed as a favour to them, still some of their number felt much regret on account of the change in their destiny. Harris, in particular, lamented over it: he said, that he had expected to die, and was ready and willing to meet the event: he preferred a sudden death, on the gallows, to a lingering death in state-prison. Yours respectfully,

C. GILES.

To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.

Utica, August 2, 1817.

DEAR BRETHREN,—To glorify God by proclaiming his works of grace, and to gratify the pious who are seeking for religious intelligence, has induced me to transmit an account of a few interesting events which have conspired with others to gladden our hearts: this year will be long remembered. The preachers have laboured faithfully and zealously, and their united efforts have been crowned with unusual success, which the following particular occurrences will show:—

In September last we held a camp meeting on Litchfield circuit; the season being cold and rainy, rendered our situation in the tented wilderness very unpleasant; but these gloomy circumstances did not impede the work of grace: both preachers and people were zealously affected in the good cause from day to day. At the close of the meeting, about one hundred souls were found who professed to know that

their sins were forgiven. Indeed, all our camp meetings have been attended with glorious consequences: hundreds are now rejoicing that they ever saw those consecrated groves, where they were awakened to see their vileness, and where they first felt the renovating power of grace.

In the revivals on Black River circuit, the preachers have added three hundred members to the church this year; and it is worthy of notice, that one of the subjects, who has a place among them, is a young man both deaf and dumb, who had a very remarkable view of the glory of heaven and the misery of hell, which he communicated to me and to others, by certain expressive signs. He appeared very happy, and devoted to God. Another subject of this work was a man who had been a long time in despair: for several years he had wholly neglected his temporal concerns; but in the revival his bands were broken, and his soul released from the power of sin and Satan. On a memorable evening, succeeding a quarterly meeting on Westmoreland circuit, twenty-three souls were brought into the kingdom of grace: to God be all the glory.

At a certain time, on Otsego circuit, an effort was made to illustrate and enforce this text: "As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." The assembly was large and very attentive; and, while the discourse was coming to a close, there was a wonderful move among them: the Spirit of God was evidently working on the hearts of the people. After the exercise was closed, as we were descending the pulpit stairs, I saw an aged man

coming toward the altar with an anxious appearance; as I moved toward him he grasped my hand, and earnestly inquired, "Is there any mercy for such a sinner as I am?" I pointed to the Bible which lay on the desk, and assured him that it contained many promises for sinners; then with greater earnestness he seized my hand with both of his, and said, "Is it possible, that such an old sinner can find mercy!" I continued to show him that God would save all who come to him through Jesus Christ. This moving event caused many in the congregation to wait. The aged penitent stood there in a state of bodily and mental agitation, till he was requested to kneel at the altar. Then the congregation was invited to attend to the opening of a season of prayer, in behalf of the subject at the altar. The exercise commenced immediately, and while our prayers were being offered for the aged sinner, others felt the same convincing influence of the Holy Spirit, and began to cry for mercy likewise: soon the mingled voices of prayer and lamentation filled the house. The scene was truly affecting. While some lay helpless under the overpowering operations of the Holy Spirit, others stood weeping around them—parents and children, husbands and wives, were mingled in the scene: they were mourning and rejoicing, singing and shouting; but fortunately there was no confusion in the house; no one was there to oppose. Jehovah reigned and wrought, and all was right and all was good.

From the time of the commencement of this work, which was about three o'clock in the afternoon, there was no cessation till eleven o'clock that night. Eight

souls were converted; still some went away sorrowing under the burden of their sins; soon afterward they came into the kingdom of grace rejoicing: some who were converted that day were triflers in the morning. How wonderful are the works of God!

One thousand members have been added to the church this year on our district; but in consequence of numerous removals to the western country, the Minutes will show an increase of only seven hundred and forty. I am, dear brethren, yours affectionately,

CHARLES GILES.

Awhile after the quarterly meeting mentioned in the above letter, I visited Cooperstown; and shortly after my arrival there, an intelligent coloured man, hearing where I had stopped, came in and introduced himself to me, wishing to obtain some advice, and also to inform me what he had recently experienced. The account he gave me was in substance as follows:—

"While at the quarterly meeting on the sabbath I was awakened, and saw myself a great sinner. I came home with a burden of misery resting on my mind, which was discovered by a young lady in the family, who inquired to know the cause of my sadness. I told her my feelings, and that I desired to be saved from my sins: the young lady advised me to read prayers; but I told her that I chose to pray out of my heart. So I went on sorrowing, praying, and seeking the Lord, till, on a certain day, as I was bowed before the throne of mercy, praying, *righteousness struck me;* my burden rolled off, and I was happy: all my sins were forgiven."

Many, who profess religion, cannot say when "*righteousness struck*" *them:* but this poor African knew the fact, and the time, and place. Reader, do you know that *righteousness has struck* you? or are you resting on a false hope, without the witness of the Spirit in your heart?

Where am I now? Four years have rolled away since I was appointed to the charge of this district: yes, four years more of my short life are gone, thrown into the common wreck of departed time, and are irredeemable. Whatever has been done aright sheds a glory on the pathway of reflection; whatever has been done wrong will remain wrong for ever. The edition of moral actions, right or wrong, after it is struck off, never can be revised or corrected. The past only sends back to the present admonitory signs to do everything correctly while time is passing on. But while we are in this mortal state we know but in part, and therefore must be liable to err; correct intentions will not always prevent errors in judgment; but perfect love fulfils the law. I have endeavoured to glorify God, to serve the church, and to do everything correctly. Though these years of my pilgrimage have been fraught with solicitude and labour, I have numbered them in the catalogue of my happiest days. A divine hand has sustained me in my official labours, comforted me in my afflictions, and brought me on to this eventful period. And now, according to our system of economy, I must resign this charge to some one who will be appointed to succeed me.

CHAPTER XII.

Chenango district—Encouragements—Two camp meetings—Owner of the ground converted—Remarks on covetousness—Eccentric preacher—Corner-stone of a church in Ithaca—Cazenovia court-house—Seminary established—Reflection.

THIS year our conference held its session in Lansing, Cayuga co., July 16, 1818; and at that conference brother G. Gary was appointed to the charge I had left, and I was stationed on Chenango district, which was bounded on the west by Cayuga Lake, extending south to Owego, and on the north it embraced that section of country where the Erie Canal is constructed, including eleven circuits, eighteen travelling preachers, and four thousand five hundred and ninety-four communicants, located in small societies, in every direction over this wide territory. This was my new field of labour, and it was chiefly a strange region to me, besides it lay remote from my place of residence. But why do I mention these little things? I had engaged to work for God, and my work lay in a regular plan before me. The glory of God and the salvation of lost sinners was the end of my calling; therefore I cheerfully mounted my horse, and rode on to accomplish my part of the work.

The annual rise and spread of evangelical religion on the district encouraged the preachers and friends to the cause to expect that numbers and means would soon place the church in a condition to wield a mightier influence in that portion of community. The preachers, by their zealous and persevering labours, were

overturning some popular prejudices, rising slowly in public estimation, and giving a happy mould and direction to many thinking minds. Camp meetings, which were generally accompanied with glorious consequences, contributed much to widen and strengthen the influence of Methodism at that day. The novelty and wildness of the camp-meeting scenery brought many there through curiosity, and immediately under the operation of our ministry. There they heard a general atonement advocated, and a free conditional salvation proclaimed—there they also heard the thrilling tones of Sinai's legal thunder, which often took the citadel of the sinner's heart by storm, throwing him trembling and agonizing at the feet of Christ. The numerous conversions resulting from these meetings, together with other remarkable occurrences, sounded abroad, and became the theme of common conversation afterward. Though some allowed themselves to scoff at what they did not understand, and others to condemn all such modes of worship, still favourable impressions were made on many minds, which tended to widen the influence of Methodism: many went from these sacred places convinced that a supernatural power was among the people. So good was done, and the cause of Christianity advanced.

Two camp meetings were held this year on the same ground, in the town of Marcellus, on the high level of that diversified country. The situation of the ground was sufficiently central, in that populous region, to attract a multitude of pious worshippers, and many curious attendants. The proprietor of the land was a respectable worldling: though not pious himself, he

was willing others should form their own opinions, and enjoy their own peculiar modes of worship; and, as a matter of course, he claimed the same privilege —he was resting on the broad system that all men would finally be saved. He, however, attended the devotional exercises, and whatever he saw or heard that was contrary to his peculiar notions, he let pass without manifesting any hostile feelings. The exercises from day to day were marked with glorious consequences. The fiery law spoke with terrific tones, and the gospel uttered good tidings of great joy to the multitude. Voices were heard, in the midst of the scene, as the sound of many waters in supplication—supernatural quakings occurred, and sinners fell on the ground, before the throne of grace, crying, "Mercy—mercy:" and when a soul found *mercy*, while the angels were rejoicing, the people of God shouted, "*Amen—Alleluiah—Glory to God in the highest.*" Then a burst of holy melody from the enraptured multitude filled the resounding wilderness.

The events which attended the exercises at that meeting were neither new nor strange to us; they constituted only a common camp-meeting scene: but the whole appeared strange to many, and nothing but confusion in the view of some, who had never been at a camp meeting before, nor seen the inside of Noah's ark, nor scanned Ezekiel's vision. The honoured attendants at the marriage supper of the Lamb from below will doubtless remember many things which they have seen on earth; and will then understand some things that are now mysterious. The Almighty's works, in the kingdom of grace, are too profound for

human comprehension, and are accomplished through simple means, which make the works appear more marvellous.

Our humble camp ground was evidently the temple of God, and the Saviour honoured it with his royal presence; angels were there, and Jehovah's "*new sharp threshing instrument*" was there also, which was kept in operation, from day to day, on that devoted *threshing-floor*. The sound was heard afar, and there was a mighty Spirit in the sound, accompanying the operations of the *instrument*, by which sin was dismantled, hard hearts broken, sleepy consciences aroused, pride subdued, and error exposed. At the close of the meeting we found many sighing souls yet unconverted, besides we gathered up fifty happy converts, who openly confessed that the Lord had broken their carnal hearts by the holy law, and raised them up again, through grace, to triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil. There was joy in the wilderness; many could cry out as the prophet Isaiah did: "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

After the lapse of a few months a convenient season arrived for another camp meeting. The place, designated for the purpose, was the old consecrated ground: the fixtures which we occupied before were all there ready for our repossession; and on the day announced for the commencement of the meeting the tribes of our Israel were seen, in every direction,

winding their way along toward the peaceful forest, fully confident that the Lord would meet them there again. The ground was soon swarming with life, and happy *countenances*, all busily engaged in erecting and arranging their temporary accommodations; soon the place resumed its former aspect: tent after tent arose in order, encircling the hallowed spot. Many gazed around, on the quiet situation, with as much delight as if the ancient *Paradise* once occupied it, especially the young converts, who found salvation there a few months before. The leafy trees waved their boughs, and seemed to welcome their arrival—the ground carpeted with leaves, where they knelt to pray for mercy, appeared delightful. The solemn sermons and exhortations—the enrapturing heavenly singing—the emotions excited by forgiving love, all were revived again, and lived in their joyful recollection.

As the devotional exercises progressed a gracious excitement appeared in the assembly, which was preparing the way for the *King of glory to come in.* The children of God were active in the prayer circles, and there was much holy inspiration and liberty in the ministrations of divine truth. The power and unction of the Holy Ghost were present, as before. Many sinners were brought to feel the power of this truth, "*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee:*" while the redeemed subjects of the Lord enjoyed the fulness of this liberty, "*Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice—let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains.*" In the course of the exercises there were some striking exhibitions of the

power and triumph of grace. The subjects felt deeply; and as Jacob struggled for a blessing, so did they; and in this way they found that "*the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*"

On the last day of our spiritual feast, when the converts were called together, fifty souls presented themselves as living witnesses that Jesus Christ has power to remit sins: they came to the meeting condemned under the curse of the broken law, but through repentance and faith they had received pardon and adopting grace. There we ascertained also that the other fifty subjects, who were converted at the preceding camp meeting, were all standing fast, and rejoicing in God. At these two meetings one hundred immortal souls were ransomed from the power of Satan, and brought into the kingdom of God. These propitious results, together with the growth of grace in the church, and the impressions made on many others, showed that our efforts were not in vain.

After some of the ordinary concluding ceremonies were ended, we bowed before the Lord to implore a blessing on the assembly before we parted. While in the solemn act of supplication, our kind friend, the proprietor of the ground, who was present at the time, came into remembrance; for whom at that moment I felt an unusual degree of sympathy, which led me to present his case before the throne of Heaven in a public manner, and that, too, with great simplicity, stating, that he had kindly let us occupy his ground to perform our acts of worship on, let the people take poles from his forest with which to construct their tents, and had been otherwise kind and indulgent to

them; then prayed that the Lord would bestow grace and salvation upon him; to reward him for his friendly acts to the disciples of Jesus, &c. The poor man heard and felt—the Lord touched his heart through the means of a few simple words. Nothing affected him (as he confessed afterward) till that moment. He had heard many thrilling sermons, moving exhortations, and ardent prayers, during the meeting, without any particular emotions—now his foundation trembled; he saw his sinfulness, and felt the need of salvation from sin. But his feelings were unknown to us when we left the ground. So, with a heavy heart, in a gloomy, wretched condition, this awakened man left the place with the rest; went to his house, where he found the throne of grace, and prayed to the Lord in his distress, and soon afterward was delivered from the wages of sin, and filled with the love of God. Some time after his conversion I came into the neighbourhood, and we happened to meet each other in the way: as I came up to him he received me into his arms with a flow of pious joy, declaring, at the same time, how the Lord had brought him up out of the dark pit of moral death, into light, life, and liberty, remitted his sins, and made him a new creature. He moreover said, "I hold earthly possessions which I have always called my own, but I was mistaken, I am only a steward: the wealth which I claimed and gloried in belongs to the Lord of heaven and earth; as my Master directs, so I must use the property which he has intrusted to my care; and I must also give an account to him for my stewardship."

It is proper here to remark that this man was a worldling by nature; but when he was converted, the Holy

Spirit impressed this sentiment on his mind, that everything which he possessed belonged to God. How many there are, in the Christian churches, who do not appear to understand this gospel truth, nor wish to know anything concerning it. Indeed, some hoard up the wealth which they collect, as if it were their own, while the heathen are perishing, the church suffering for aid, and the poor starving around them. They pretend that they have nothing to spare. The word *benevolence* sounds unpleasantly on their ears, and prints a frown on their brow. "*To do good and to communicate*" is a painful work to them—like plucking out their eyes. When the Lord by his agents calls on them for the interest on the principal which he has lent them, they are prompt to reject the call, under the pretext that they are in debt for some property which they have recently purchased. So, with a parsimonious grasp, they hold upon the shrine of mammon, and reject the demand of Heaven. Do such persons believe the Bible? which says, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God," Eph. v, 5. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Matt. xix, 23. That saying touched his idol: he was an idolater; his property was his god, and his heart was the temple where this idol was set up:—*he went away sorrowful*, unreconciled to the requirement of Christ.

He loved his property more than he did eternal life; the last we heard of him he was sorrowful, and he may be sorrowful still. "Will covetousness send a man to hell?"

I was acquainted with a man, a member in our communion, who had only two in family; though independently rich he was continually struggling and grasping to enhance his possessions. Whenever called upon to contribute something to aid the church, or the missionary cause, he had many excuses to offer, but no money to spare. The brethren asked him what he intended to do with his property: he readily answered, "I am keeping it for the Lord." Still he refused to let the Lord have it: even when he sent his servants to him asking for means to aid his holy cause, he turned them away empty, and so spurned the orders of Heaven.

Avarice is a common, subtle evil, which has crept into the church under a plausible mask, and always has been a disgrace to the benevolent cause of Christianity. Covetousness is the foster-parent of "*the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,*" which are so destructive to vital piety and practical godliness: indeed, "*the love of money is the root of all evil.*" Many impious branches spring from this fatal root; and the only way to exterminate them is to lay the axe at the root of the evil, and cut the tree of covetousness down; then the branches will perish. Help, men of Israel, help! let preachers and people cry, *Help!*—strike deeply, and strike often. It is, however, a difficult evil to eradicate, being so closely interwoven with the elements of the carnal heart, and besides it is made, by

many, a part of practical education. Some parents labour to instil the principles of selfishness into the minds of their children, while they enforce the instructions by their own sordid example. Children thus instructed will always be selfish in their inclinations through life, unless their hearts should be changed by sanctifying grace; and even then covetousness will be their besetting sin.

The philosophy of benevolence should always be made a prominent branch of practical education. Children should be taught that *charity*, *sympathy*, and *kindness*, are among the brightest ornaments of the human mind; and that covetousness is not only hateful, but a sin that will sink the soul into hell. They should not only learn the principles of benevolence, but the objects and channels for its proper operation should be distinctly pointed out to them, even if they should never be able to communicate a mite:—only a desire to do good will have its reward. Benevolence, by expanding the energies of the soul, contributes much to the flow of happiness, and also prevents the needless waste of property, by using it to relieve the poor and suffering.

While travelling through the country, I embraced an opportunity to hear the Rev. ——, who was styled, by some, an eccentric preacher. I was however disappointed; he was entirely a different character from that which I had formed of him from common report. He appeared deeply pious, and had a store of literary and experimental knowledge. Indeed, he seemed to be a favourite child of *nature*, whom she had kindly endowed with rare talents. In an unaffected manner,

he went on to illustrate his subject without any notes to encumber the freedom of thought. He was always himself, as he should be, without the appearance of imitating any one. The method which he pursued was natural and easy, the results of a clear, discriminating mind. He appeared to understand correctly everything he said, which was accompanied, too, with deep feeling: every sentence was formed for a fixed purpose, like a bullet for the mark. The congregation could not sleep while he was preaching; they sometimes wept; and when an apt, illustrative figure surprised them, a sudden momentary smile played over their countenances, which was only a joyful approval of the truth which flashed upon their minds at the moment. I was very much delighted with the sacred performance, and said to myself, If that man, with his originality, aptness, and independence, be eccentric, I could wish that many more ministers of the gospel were eccentric too.

Some, not being possessed of discriminating powers themselves, attribute all the independent workings of rare talents to eccentricity; hence this devoted minister was styled eccentric—a detractive epithet. It is generally supposed that the person who is styled eccentric, possesses some mental defects, though many cannot tell what the defects are. But no one is eccentric while he keeps within his own appropriate sphere, and moves in his course effectually, always having good reasons to show for everything he does, though some peculiarities may appear in his mode of operating. There are different modes of working by which the same end is gained, and each mode may

have strong reasons for its support. Where several roads lead to the same central place, no man is deemed eccentric for travelling either, because he can give good reasons for his mode of travelling, and also for the road he has selected. A lunatic is properly eccentric; he acts by momentary impulses, without designs or reasons for his actions. So if any one acts, from strange impulses, without a rational cause or motive to justify the action, the act must be eccentric. Nevertheless, what would be irregular and wild under some circumstances, would be perfectly regular and proper under other circumstances. If a man should rush into a church, at the time of devotion, and cry aloud without a just cause for doing so, the act would be very eccentric; but if a burning building occasioned the outcry, no one would call the act eccentric or improper. The causes on which actions are based give all the character of regularity or irregularity to the acts. The general who has an army under his control, knows his own sphere and business—he marches toward the enemy's redoubt, then turns his course a little, and, after performing certain zigzag movements, returns to his encampment without firing a gun. Shall we therefore say that the general is an eccentric man? No—he had reasons for all his movements: his acts, however, appeared quite eccentric in the view of those who did not understand the reasons which governed his actions.

This topic must be now dismissed, or I shall be deemed eccentric too, for dwelling so long on eccentricity—a subject not often noticed by authors, and of little consequence to many readers, though the word is

frequently used in colloquial conversation. The cause for the above remarks is partly a sympathy for an unfortunate word, which a blind, heedless custom, has long abused.

In Ithaca we had a growing society, and, while animated with bright prospects, they resolved to make an effort to erect a house for divine worship. The preparatory steps in the undertaking were attended with success. A pleasant site was selected and secured, the materials in part prepared, when I was called to aid them in the pleasing task to lay the corner-stone. Knowing that we were to have some religious exercises on the occasion, of which notice had been given, the villagers gathered to the place, and many pious friends from the adjoining neighbourhoods came thither also. With pleasure we beheld the multitude congregated there, to see the corner-stone laid for a Methodist church in Ithaca. The ceremony of placing the *stone* being ended, I stepped upon the solid corner, and after singing, and imploring the blessing of Heaven, delivered a discourse, in which an effort was made to illustrate the great plan of salvation, in which Jesus Christ is represented under the similitude of a corner-stone, uniting two walls in the same grand superstructure, by which equal benefits and privileges were provided for both Jews and Gentiles. The wide field of a free, conditional salvation, lay open before me, with all its blooming promises and inviting doctrines; whither I endeavoured to lead the listening assembly. The occasion was crowned with the blessing of God, which augured favourably respecting the prosperity of the church in future years. The congregation,

though under the open sky, remained quiet and attentive during the exercise, which continued over an hour.

In those days my vocal organs were remarkably sound and strong; no reasonable effort in speaking impaired their energy in the least. Being long accustomed, by necessity, to speak in the open air, at quarterly meetings, and on camp grounds, where thousands frequently assembled, my lungs became so inured to the labour, that it was not a difficult task to preach an hour, so that five or six thousand could hear distinctly.

In years elapsed Cazenovia had been a county seat, but, through some antagonizing interests, its location had been changed to Morrisville, consequently the old court-house was given up to be sold. The situation was pleasant for a church, the building new and substantial, and the court-room, without remodelling, would accommodate a large assembly; hence, the Methodist society in the village, and in its environs, with the influence of their preachers, matured the plan to purchase the court-house, and convert it into a house of worship. Accordingly, on the day of sale, the official members in the society made the contemplated purchase. Though the property was obtained at a price far below its original cost, still the sum stipulated to be paid was a heavy responsibility on the few who had to bear it. On entering the district, I found the society struggling under weighty embarrassments. The building, however, was a great convenience to them; there they could assemble and render homage to their God. But the heavy debt on the premises

was a continual trouble, and how to dispose of it was the pressing question. At length the project was originated, to make an effort to establish a conference seminary there, take the court-house and remodel it for the use of the school, and so release the society from their oppressive liability. Though the project was new, we had reason to believe it would attract the fostering patronage of the church and community; so in due time we should realize fully our pleasing anticipations.

At this time our conference was in a prosperous condition, exerting a happy influence on community by its efficient ministry. The sphere for usefulness was widening around us, and hence our obligations were pressing us forward. The public mind began to be excited by a laudable spirit of enterprise; improvements in many things were being originated, and literature was on the advance, and receiving encouragement everywhere. At this favourable juncture I was fully convinced that the time had come for our conference to engage in a public literary enterprise. Learning being an auxiliary to religion in every department of the church, we, therefore, greatly needed a literary institution under the supervision and patronage of the conference; and Providence, at this time, was opening the way for us to engage effectually in the laudable undertaking.

Cazenovia being a fine village, pleasantly situated on the margin of a small, beautiful lake, imbosomed in an undulating, healthy country, rich and fertile, abounding in the comforts of life, away from bustling crowds, with a population, in general, respectable and moral:

these advantages conspired altogether to render it a favourable location for a literary institution. I therefore engaged in the undertaking, with high expectations that in a few passing years a flourishing seminary of learning would be seen as an ornamental appendage to the village.

As a proper preliminary measure, a village meeting was called to give character and publicity to our object, and to elicit the views and opinions of the citizens, respecting the contemplated design. According to our expectations, a respectable number of influential gentlemen attended the meeting. In the address an attempt was made to show the probable advantages that the village would derive from a literary establishment there. The youth could be educated at a small expense, and be kept, at the same time, under the control and watchful eye of their parents. Moreover, a flourishing seminary would necessarily aid many branches of business, enhance the value of real estate, and so render the place more wealthy. Furthermore, they were assured, that the institution, if established, would be conducted on liberal principles; sectarianism would form no branch of instruction; the students would be left free to attend either of the churches, at the option of their parents, &c. Many of the attendants were delighted with the scheme; they conceived that the timely undertaking augured the future prosperity of their village. Such an institution as was in contemplation, in their opinion, would more than compensate them for the loss which they had sustained by the removal of the county seat. Besides, they confessed that they needed some public enterprise to

give a spur to business, and to resuscitate the village, which was then in a languishing condition.

After doing all that could be done to give form and tangibility to the design, I carried it up to the next annual conference to obtain official action on it. In due time I laid it before that deliberative body, with all the encouraging circumstances attending it, together with my views respecting the utility, necessity, and practicability of such an undertaking. The conference being friendly to a literary institution, no one felt any disposition to oppose the attempt. The project, however, seemed rather visionary in the view of many at that early day. Other business having precedence, it was not acted upon till near the close of the session, and then a resolution was passed which gave sanction to the design. Still some of the members imagined that it would end there, and perish like Jonah's gourd. But *no*, we were then provided with authority for action, hence we moved onward constitutionally, and with zeal, to test the liberality of our friends and the community around us. After struggling against opposition, and enduring many cares and embarrassments, our efforts were crowned with success, and the seminary finally became established.

To accomplish this public benefit, I was necessarily subjected to much additional care, expense, and responsibility, which natural consequences were anticipated. Well, it was a duty that devolved upon me, as a minister, in the relation I sustained to the church and community. Though the institution has not afforded me one cent of personal benefit, nor probably will during my life, still I never have regretted, for a mo-

ment, the toil and sacrifice which its origination cost me. To see it continue to flourish is a consolation, alone sufficient to compensate me for all my toil, while others enjoy its direct advantages and emoluments.

Fearing that this narrative will grow into a burdensome volume, I must omit many incidents, and hasten on to bring this chapter to a close; knowing that time is precious, and realizing, too, that it is now passing away while I am writing; and, by retrospection, I see how imperceptibly time has rolled along. Four years have made their transition since I came on to this district, and now my work is done—whether much or little, well or ill, all is tumbled into the past, but will come up again to be reviewed, by the impartial eye of God, at the judgment day. In these four years I officiated at one hundred and sixty-four quarterly meetings; travelled some thousands of miles through heat, and cold, and storms, over rugged roads; preached some hundreds of sermons, and formed an extensive acquaintance with the pious and friendly community in that wide region. But, then, on quitting the district, I left my parting benediction with them: probably, I shook hands with thousands, the most of whom I have never seen since.

CHAPTER XIII.

Oneida district—A young preacher—Former scenes revived—Changes in society—Remarks on education—Practical school—Mrs. Hemans—Elihu Burritt—Dr. Franklin—Continual warfare—A pious family—Great excitement—Opposition to excitements—Troubles in the church—Brother T.—Reformation in Utica.

THE conference, this year, held its session at Vienna, Ontario co., July 24, 1822; and there brother Gary was made my successor, and I was appointed again to Oneida district, my former "*Mount Pleasant*," where my family continued to reside. The district having been divided, I found my field of labour much more pleasant and contracted than it was before. Nevertheless, I had eight circuits, on which were stationed thirteen preachers besides myself; all in good health, and active in the ministry, with brilliant hopes gilding the borders of our future life:—but where are we now! While I am writing three are slumbering in the tomb: one has unhappily fallen from his sacred elevation; and only three remain effective labourers in the church: all the others are superannuated, excepting one, who, for certain reasons, left our community and joined another church. He, however, continues to be a warm friend to the M. E. Church; and is now fully convinced that our ordination is valid, and we are all in the true "*succession*."

A young preacher, whose initials are I—— S——, was admitted this year into the annual conference, and stationed on my district, according to my special request. The following occurrence will show how I

became acquainted with him; which circumstance gave him a large place in my confidence and concern. A year or two before, while officiating at a quarterly meeting on Chenango circuit, I noticed in the assembly a young man who arose in the love-feast, and spoke in a very intelligent and moving manner. Though I had heard others speak as well as he did, still there was an unusual spirit and influence accompanying his words to my understanding, which convinced me that he was one of those distinguished characters whom the Lord had chosen to preach his everlasting gospel. After the congregation had dispersed, I ascertained the young man's name, and place of residence; without delay, under the impulse of my feelings, I sent a verbal communication by a faithful friend, requesting him to dispose of his property, disengage himself from the world, and prepare to enter the gospel field. It appeared that the Lord had revealed to him his course of duty before he received my advice. My friendly request, however, operated as an exciting cause to move him to action. Therefore, without much hesitation, he relinquished his worldly engagements, and entered into the holy work as soon as an opening occurred on the circuit; then came up to the conference, where he was admitted, as before stated. The peculiar impressions which were made on my mind respecting his call to the ministry had a direct tendency to place him deeply in my affections; and from that time the name, Isaac Stone, has never been forgotten.

This region had long been my home; and, as I travelled from place to place, I found myself attended

with a continual resurrection of departed scenes. The hills, the valleys, the brooks, and winding roads, were all my old acquaintances, where in former days I went musing on my way to proclaim some awful message to dying sinners. The sight of habitations, together with the appendages belonging to these localities, where I had often been before, called into recollection many pleasing associations. The sprightly beast that carried me along, which had been my faithful, enduring servant for many years, seemed to recognise every road, lane, and house, where he had formerly been, as readily as myself; and seemed, by all his movements also, to express a pleasure while drawing near to some frequented lane, or dwelling. And I will here say, that this animal had been so long in the pioneer service, that he understood every part of his duty, was always obedient and trusty, in dangers and difficulties. Whenever he came to a bridge which appeared unsafe he always would stop, and look back, seemingly to induce me to go first, and examine it; then he would follow after me over openings, and suspicious places, apparently fearless, knowing that I had never led him into difficulty; therefore, he did not fear that I would. As I passed round, it was truly amusing to notice how pleased the boys were to see old *Black* come again: and, through sheer motives of kindness, they often surfeited him with grain. Money was frequently offered, as a temptation, to alienate him from the pioneer service; but it was in vain. He was retained in the service till, unfortunately, blindness came upon him; and even then he was a true and faithful servant. Solomon said, "A righteous man regardeth the life of

his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

Though but few important changes were discoverable in the aspect of the country over which I travelled, still a diversity of changes had been going on, in the community, which were visible everywhere among those with whom I was acquainted. Some had died, and were slumbering in the grave; others had removed to distant regions; some had changed their habitations, and others their conditions. But these changes were only common occurrences in the present state of the world. Human society is very mutable; there are no fixtures in its constitution: the elements which constitute its adhesiveness are continually varying; rising or falling, combining or dissolving: friends become enemies, and enemies become friends. While one loses everything, another gains a fortune; as the feeble grow healthy, the robust decline; the living to-day may be in eternity to-morrow. So the world passes on.

Though I had much ministerial work to perform, and many cares daily resting upon me, still the territory over which I had to travel was much smaller, and, consequently, my labours were not so burdensome as in former years. Hence I had many more leisure hours for reading and writing—but no time to waste. Methodism not only teaches order in everything, but it enjoins activity and diligence also. "Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed." Something should be always under the hammer. Study and practice will reveal the summit of a man's ability: without the combination of these two agencies, he

never can fully know his own intellectual self. Nature's endowments must be improved: by mental exertion the elastic powers of the soul are ascertained. This work may be advantageously begun in classical schools, but it cannot be consummated there. The work will employ a man's whole vigorous life. Our duty as Christians, and our calling as ministers, require us to bring into active service all the abilities nature has bestowed upon us, leaving no energy to lie dormant and useless in the mental laboratory. True, there is a marked difference in men: some are endowed with stronger intellects than others; yet every common mind possesses native strength sufficient, if it were brought into exercise, to accomplish much good, and to rise to a respectable eminence in knowledge.

The travelling preacher finds himself providentially initiated into a great theological school, where study and practice move on together: what he gains by study is brought into daily use; and hence it becomes deeply printed on the memory. The Holy Bible, the great *text-book*, is before him; the productions of learned men are at his command; the works of God, in the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace, are all open to his view; and, in answer to prayer, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit attends him, to direct his mind into all truth. So, while he continues in the sacred work of the ministry, his course of study must also, necessarily, continue. Therefore he cannot finish his studies at any stated time; for after learning all that he can in one day, there will be other things to learn in the next. So he must pursue his course of learning through life, and graduate on the day of his

death. If he should continue faithful to that day, he will be admitted to a celestial degree, and have the title of immortal *saintship* conferred on him, with a starry crown, and a *diploma*, containing a mystical name, written in a "*white stone*;" which will be a more glorious appendage of honour than any distinguishing letters in the alphabet can confer by being appended to a dying name.

I was acquainted with a young man who had been under an impression that he was called to preach, but, for some reasons, he relinquished the undertaking, and turned his attention another way. Being desirous to gain knowledge he went away, and spent a few months at school; and when he returned he appeared quite self-sufficient, and boastingly said, "I have finished my studies." The words, as he uttered them, accompanied with a certain air, seemed to indicate that he wished us all to understand that he was perfect in knowledge, or that he had knowledge enough. One of the company said in reply, "I hope that he has not finished his studies, for there are many more things which he ought to learn"—meaning his own weakness, &c.

It is a very common occurrence that young persons, having but little experience, after toiling through the ordinary catalogue of books in the institution, easily slide into the conclusion that their labour is done, and their education finished; when, indeed, they are only prepared with rudimental acquisitions to enter the great practical school of life, to perform effectual operations in the world:—like a mechanic with a knowledge of his art, and a good set of tools ready for

business. The practical man will not only find use for all the learning he has acquired, but will see it needful to gain more; and will be obliged to keep on studying to retain what he knows, and to bring into practice what he has learned. Some, by relying on the reputation they have gained as accomplished scholars, pass on negligently, till, in a few years, much of their acquirements become extinct. "When I left college," said a certain gentleman, "I could read Greek fluently, but now I do not know the alphabet." And I have heard others make similar remarks respecting their imperfect knowledge of some of the arts and sciences, which they once well understood.

Any common mind can toil through a course of studies, acquire a stock of theoretical knowledge, and, in the end, obtain collegiate honours: but the lessons, in the great *practical* school of life, are attended with more difficulties; hence, but few obtain even honorary degrees there. In the *practical* school great minds show themselves: there native genius is exhibited, and the mighty intellect finds an ample field for its operation. There the enterprising artisan brings out his wonder-working inventions; there, also, the shrewd agriculturist shows his skill in managing the genial earth, and forming a subtle alliance with kind nature to accumulate wealth; and the statesman, with his comprehensive, governing powers, rises there into fame; while the philosopher, by his intellectual acumen, unlocks the arcana of nature, and travels through the universe. There the sculptor, with his comparing talent, is seen turning marble rocks into human forms; while the painter, with his skilful pencil,

causes the pictorial canvass to deceive the eye, and makes his striking figures almost breathe and talk. There the acute logician, at the legal bar, carries the thoughtful jury along with him, and sways the court with his magical eloquence. The gifted herald of salvation finds room there to put in operation the strong powers of his burning soul, by which he moves the wondering multitude, and brings the sinner trembling at the feet of Christ.

St. Paul said to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." *Study*, that is the key of knowledge: wonderful things can be effected by laborious research. Knowledge is indeed necessary, and it can be acquired. If you have no one to teach you, you must teach yourself, as many others have done. The following instances will show what can be accomplished by a methodical improvement of time, and a close application to study.

Mr. Thatcher says, in his remarks on the life and poetry of Mrs. Hemans, that "she was, from the first, to a considerable degree, *self*-educated. The Latin and French she was partly taught, in addition, of course, to the Welsh and English. The Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and German, she taught herself, and that thoroughly, as her translations are sufficient to indicate. The Swedish, also, if not some other tongues, she began to study in later days. She played on the piano, and was taught the harp also, by an old Welsh minstrel. She composed a good deal of music besides.

"The mere amount of her poetry itself—considering

only its general excellence, finish, and variety—when we bear in mind the long period of abstinence which succeeded her first publication—the ordinary cares of a married life, for a mother, in no opulent condition—and, finally, the fact that she died, at last, in the very bloom of her maturity (a little over forty years of age)—the mere amount of her compositions, we say, speaks in behalf of her wonderful application.

"She not only wrote religiously, but religiously prepared herself to write. She thought, read, studied, practised, suffered with that view—and here is an excellence, which some of her admirers, we fear, will be slow to emulate, of prime importance as it is. They must make up their minds, however, to delve. There is no other way. It is not only, as Degerando maintains, a virtue, and a harmony, in the great concert of life, which fills the temple of the world, but a necessity also. Happy is it for those who learn early that it is so, and who labour as they learn."

"Of Elihu Burritt, the self-taught Massachusetts linguist, whose wonderful acquisitions have been treasured up amid toil and poverty, and in those intervals which are usually devoted to repose or recreation," Dr. Nelson, in his communication to the editor of the Southern Liberty Messenger, writes thus:—"In the summer of 1838, Governor Everett, of Massachusetts, in an address to an association of mechanics in Boston, took occasion to mention that a blacksmith of that state had, by his unaided industry, made himself acquainted with *fifty languages*. In July of the following year, says the doctor, I was passing through Worcester, the place of his present residence,

and gratified my curiosity by calling to see him. Like any other son of Vulcan, Mr. Burritt was at his anvil. I introduced myself to him, observing that I had read with pleasure and with unfeigned astonishment an account of him by the governor of his state, which had induced me to take the liberty of paying him a visit. The stage drove up, and I most reluctantly left him, exacting, however, a promise that he would write me some account of himself—of his past and present studies." The following statement is an extract taken from Mr. Burritt's letter to Dr. Nelson:—

"All that I have accomplished, or expect or hope to accomplish, has been and will be by that plodding, patient, persevering process of accretion, which builds the ant-heap—particle by particle, thought by thought —fact by fact. And if I ever was actuated by ambition, its highest and furthest aspiration reached no further than the hope to set before the *young* men of my country an example in employing those fragments of time called 'odd moments.' And, sir, I should esteem it an honour of costlier *water* than the tiara encircling a monarch's brow, if my future activity and attainments should encourage American *working men* to be proud and jealous of the credentials which God has given them to every eminence and immunity in the empire of mind. These are the views and sentiments with which I have sat down, night by night, for years, with blistered hands and brightening hope, to studies which I hoped might be serviceable to that class of community to which I am proud to belong."

It is admitted that Dr. Franklin was endowed by nature with a capacious mind: strong in every point.

But the development of his native energies was the result of his own exertion and application. He was industrious and provident: early learned to estimate the worth of time. He studied the laws of nature critically, together with the philosophy and economy of human life. By his own efforts he made himself a theoretical and practical statesman, philosopher, moralist, and scholar. His memory is adorned with imperishable fame.

These striking examples are sufficient, without introducing others, to show how much depends on a studious application to bring out the native talent and energy of the human mind. This I have done to encourage young men to be enterprising, particularly my young brethren in the ministry, who have not been favoured with a classical education. As you have the capacity to acquire knowledge, let me say, you can acquire it; the key of knowledge is in your own hand. Study, preach, write, and be wise—pray, watch, believe, and be happy. Let study and practice operate together; both combined will make the scholar and the effective preacher.

To reach a mountain top we must expect to find an up-hill road: such a road I have learned, by experience, is travelled slowly and tediously. The road to eminence, in anything, is up hill; and the only way to succeed well is to select a course and pursue it; turn not to the right or to the left, but keep the grand object always in view, and direct all your energies to accomplish it. To change and turn about, to avoid delving, will never carry you up to eminence. But perseverance in any good cause will make a man

famous in that one thing. One man cannot be great in everything, nor is it necessary that he should be.

While on the topic of education, I will take the liberty to say, that many young ladies in this age of improvement, after being at school till they have run through the common course of studies, and learned to touch the piano keys, return home more impressed than ever that *work*, especially housework, is too low and servile for fashionable females; therefore they must not be seen in the business department of the house. They imagine that their accomplishments and qualifications are enough: hence there is nothing more to be done, forgetful that it is important for them, whether rich or poor, to understand both the theory and practice of the several domestic arts. For she who knows not how work ought to be done, cannot do it herself, nor tell others how it should be done. Hence it often occurs that domestic work is very badly executed, and done without any proper system: to know how to work is an important part of education. Leaving this topic here, we will pass on.

As a soldier in the sacramental host of the Lord, I was obliged to keep up a continual warfare against the world, which was inclined to assume many antichristian aspects. In almost every corner of the land daring enemies to God and his holy religion appeared, under the covert of some dogmatical theory, which the gospel minister had to encounter. I discovered that *infidelity*, like a spreading tree, had many branches, all fostered by, and depending, on the same root; and different fraternities were formed under its shadow. Though their theories were heterogeneous, there was a

family likeness, and an affinity existing among them; when one was assailed by the gospel, they seemed to unite their strength against the truth, and manifested a common sympathy for each other. So I discovered that all the branches of infidelity were one, in nature and character, manifesting a deadly enmity against the work of saving grace and godliness. Hence, in assailing the common vices of human nature, it was perceptible that I offended infidelity, because such carnal speculations and the carnal heart were closely confederated. My duty, however, was to act conscientiously, and declare the whole counsel of God; so endeavour to demolish sin and error, the two main pillars of Satan's strong-hold. To betray my trust to gain the applause of the world, I well knew would be inglorious, and ruinous in the end. My engagements to God would not allow me to enter into a compromise with the prince of darkness. Jehovah had erected his evangelical fort, and placed his ordnance within its batteries, where I was appointed to stand, to exhibit the terrors of the Lord, and to call the world to rally around the Saviour's crimson banner. So I kept the glorious end in view.

Many years ago, in this country, I became acquainted with a family that was very highly favoured with divine gifts and blessings. The man and his wife were known to be "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"—they were early disciples of the Wesleyan school. And in the order of Providence this godly couple were blessed with five sons and six daughters; and fortunately while young, without much hesitation,

they came one after another into the kingdom of grace: —so they had a small church in their own domestic circle. A long and intimate acquaintance with this pious household made us mutual friends; but the circumstance that we were members of the same great Methodist family, at that early day, greatly strengthened the bonds of our social affinity. One remarkable feature in the picture of this pious family is found in the fact, that the five sons are now preachers of the everlasting gospel. The mother of this family, while living,—she is now in Abraham's bosom,—rejoiced greatly, and praised the Lord her Saviour, that he had been pleased to confer on the family the distinguishing honour of calling her sons, one after another, to preach his gospel—which happy event she did not expect when they were consecrated to God in their childhood. Two of the daughters several years ago died in peace, and joined the happy spirits in heaven before the death of their mother. The aged father is still alive; and, in the summer of 1841, at a family meeting on the spot where his children were once around him, joyfully greeted his five sons, two of his daughters, with all their companions, together with a dozen or more grandchildren; and there, at a series of meetings, the sons successively addressed their old neighbours from the sacred desk. Sabbath morning presented a most interesting spectacle. After the congregation had assembled for worship, the old gentleman came into the church, followed in due order by his children, and, while his devoted sons dispensed the words of life, the pious old patriarch heard with emotions of delight, and "worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff:"—per-

haps the spirits of those departed ones were there also, invisible spectators of the moving scene.

If Noah before the flood had been favoured with the company of this family, in his lonely condition, his sainted soul would have shouted for joy. Noah was then the only preacher of righteousness in the whole world! With such a family of ministers in his neighbourhood, the good old patriarch could have formed a small Methodist conference in the antediluvian world. Such a constellation of sacred lights, moving amid the darkness of that day, would have cheered the heart of Noah, and greatly assisted him in his ministry, if not in building the ark. They altogether would have made a great excitement in the old wicked world. But if, by the destiny of Providence, they had been Noah's cotemporaries, I should have been destitute of one great consolation; for this year one of them was stationed in Utica, with whose cheering company I was favoured from time to time: and even at this day, whenever I visit the city of New-York, I always find the same dear brother at No. 200 Mulberry-street, who is well known as editor of that celebrated periodical, the Quarterly Review,—there! after all my reservedness, I have disclosed his *cognomen*, without saying frankly, Dr. Peck.

At a certain time we were holding a camp meeting on the eastern part of my district; the exercises from day to day had been conducted with great regularity and solemnity, but no extraordinary excitement had marked the progress of the meeting till on one memorable afternoon. It was ascertained that there were some irreligious persons in the congregation, who

where labouring under serious impressions; and, during the intermission, I conversed with a lady who was inconsolable—quite on the verge of despondency: she had been under powerful temptations for some time. When the congregation was called together to engage in a praying exercise, I requested the despairing lady, and likewise all the penitents, to come into the central place before the stand: soon a number of seats were filled with broken-hearted penitents:—a moving spectacle for a pious eye to behold. Then I requested the Christian brethren to come in next, and form a circle around the penitents; which being done, the rest of the assembly gathered round on the outside of the circle, to gratify their curiosity, by seeing and hearing. After the conclusion of a short address, and the singing of an appropriate hymn, I requested the penitents, together with the pious part of the assembly, to kneel before the Lord, and call on him for mercy and grace—expecting that the usual order would be observed; that one would follow another in vocal prayer. But after I had uttered a few sentences in prayer, my vocal tones were lost in a swelling roar of mingled voices from the excited multitude. The sound was solemn, impressive, and awfully grand; like the organ of nature when playing a wild storm-anthem in the orchestra of the cloud-wrapped heavens. While the wavy sound rolled over the hills, and reverberated through the wilderness, I realized that there was a holy charm in it, which seemed to produce an overwhelming and subduing influence:—the Holy Ghost was evidently among the people. It brought to my remembrance the following scenes, described in

the Revelation of St. John :—"I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.—And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.—And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

As these wonderful scenes were all consistent with the perfect order which reigns in heaven, so there was no discord or confusion discoverable in the commingled tones of these devout worshippers on the camp ground. They were all united in feeling, action, and design; and their suppliant voices sounded harmoniously; for they were engaged in performing one set piece of devotion, corresponding to the swelling emotions of their ardent souls. So the various tones which bore their holy aspirations, played, in concert, on the vibratory nerve of the listening ear, and rolled upward to meet the bending heavens. An awful solemnity reigned throughout the assembly during this unusual exercise. Indeed, the irreligious part of the congregation stood and gazed with wonder and amazement. The power and grace of God were manifested in such a wonderful manner, that Satan was expelled from the soul of the desponding lady, and many others

were healed who were afflicted with spiritual plagues. Hence there was joy among the angels in heaven, and peace and good will upon earth—melody in hearts, melody in songs, which filled the wilderness with melody.

When I have seen the operations of the Holy Spirit exciting surprise and wonder, by passing over some lines marked out by established rules and modes, this thought has occurred, Perhaps we spend too much time in hewing and polishing stones for the Lord's altar, and rest too much on the externals of religion. The operations of divine power are not confined to our plans and local views. While observing the form of godliness, we should be looking for the coming of the Holy Ghost to impart to us the spiritual baptism. Still, some are opposed to all spiritual operations, fearing they will disturb their rules of order, and bring confusion into the church:—religious excitements in the opinion of some are fearful events.

Many years ago I heard a minister rebuke a woman, sharply, for weeping, who was deeply impressed at the time with a view of her sinfulness; and, at another meeting, I heard a minister in high standing say, in the presence of a number who were sad and weeping, that he did not like to see people weep, and reproved them for not suppressing their feelings—probably he had forgotten that Jesus wept.

Many are inclined to believe that feeling, zeal, and ardour, belong, appropriately, to worldly concerns; and hence are not consistent with piety and religion. The politician must be zealous in his important undertaking. The attorney, in pleading the cause of his client, must be ardent also; and every man in pursuing

his worldly designs should be engaged likewise. But the preacher, the ambassador of Jesus Christ, it seems, must be unmoved himself, and be careful not to raise any excitement among the people in the house of God. Alas! is not this carefulness to suppress excitements, and to keep religion confined to mere mechanical ceremonies, the cause why careless sinners are so little interested and benefited in the house of worship? Being trained to this monotonous sameness, the minister appears to be afraid to move one step out of the beaten track, fearing he might possibly produce a degree of pious friction, and by that means some sparks of sacred fire might be elicited, and ignite the sleepy, stupid assembly; so set the neighbourhood on fire. Indeed, it is a lamentable fact, that some preachers are too deficient in zeal and pathos to make the house of worship an interesting place. How often do careless sinners sit there,—members of the church also,—and gaze around on each other, or nod and sleep, while a sermon is being preached, or a discourse read off in a dull, monotonous tone, as cold and passionless as a slice hewn from an iceberg! When the closing "*Amen*" comes out, it produces more feeling and excitement than all the rest of the discourse. The hearers are then released from their task, and glad to retire from their painful confinement. Is this the way to preach the gospel of Christ to a perishing world?

The church in her militant state, while passing through the changes attending this erring world, I saw was liable to many evils and grievous commotions. Misunderstandings often excite jealousies and cruel

animosities. Even an incautious word or act frequently kindles the fire of contention; and a partial knowledge of facts in a case unavoidably leads the judgment to an erroneous decision. Paul and Barnabas fell into a sharp contention; still they both may have been conscientious in their views. It is probable that Barnabas was in an error—so it appeared to St. Paul. They parted soon afterward, and so the matter ended. Some grievous troubles entered into the church while I was on the district, which afflicted many, and were exceedingly painful to a few. But after being formally adjusted, the affair was thrown aside to slumber till the final judgment day, where both the right and the wrong, the evil and the good, will be reviewed, and weighed in the unerring scales of immutable justice. So if any one suffers wrongfully here, he has some consolation in knowing that everything will be made right in the great world of retribution.

As St. Paul was comforted by the coming of Titus, so was I comforted when the conference sent brother T—— to a circuit on my district. Being one in the council where the appointments were made out, I confess that my influence was exerted to effect the desirable object. While travelling on Chenango district, a few years before, I often passed through the town where his father resided; at whose hospitable mansion I found a delightful resting place. And there I became acquainted with brother T——, who was then young, affable, and pious. The kindness which he manifested to me, indicated the goodness and benevolence of his soul, which instinctively entwined around the cords of my heart; so he became dear to me.

And besides, he commenced travelling while I was on that district; therefore it was no strange thing that I should desire his company in my field of labour. He was also young in the ministry; and I thought that it was possible I might be serviceable to him. But I soon learned that the appointment to Litchfield circuit was oppressive to his youthful nerves. The hills and valleys where his circuit lay appeared to his imagination rugged, gloomy, and forbidding; far away from his father's house and the delightful shore of the Cayuga Lake, where he had spent his juvenile days. But, fortunately, he was endowed with courage, and withal was zealous and persevering; hence, like a true-hearted soldier, he mounted his horse, set his face toward the rising sun, and came praying and musing along the lonely way, reflecting on the past, and trying to read the future.

Jacob, in his younger days, after leaving his father's house, and on his way to Padan-aram, felt lonely and sad, unconscious of the good fortune which awaited him at the house of Laban. A gloomy spirit is continually prophesying evil, and is quite blind to the good which lies in future. A Christian, however, is saved by hope from many gloomy fears. Though brother T—— saw toils, trials, and discouragements before him, and knew not what success would attend his labours, or what good fortune awaited him in the region where he was destined to travel; still he came there in a gracious state of mind, laboured faithfully, and the results were auspicious. The people were glad that he came among them; and he rejoiced as much as they that he was sent there to labour.

That hilly region contained a treasure unknown to him before. He came from home a *lone* stranger, and there he fortunately found his other self, a pious *gem*, which was a pleasing occurrence to him; and I had the pleasure to meet them at the hymenial altar, and by my holy office to ratify their union for life. So, through the direction of Providence, this young preacher returned home to visit his friends, encouraged and delighted, willing to endure persecution, toils, and sufferings, in the cause of Christ; and he still remains a shining star among the stars of the west. He will forgive the liberty I have presumed to take, for I am well acquainted with brother M. Tooker.

This year, 1825, Zachariah Paddock and Ephraim Hall were appointed to labour in Utica and Paris. They were both young men, zealous and devoted ministers of the gospel: and to me, indeed, it was highly gratifying to see these young brethren, with whom I had beeen long acquainted, engaged in the sacred work of the ministry; rising in public estimation, and affording promise that they would become pillars of strength and durability in the militant church. But, alas, how precarious is human life!—how frequently the church is disappointed, and left to mourn over the ruin of her blooming hopes! Soon after the close of the year, in the midst of his usefulness and promise, brother Hall lost his health, and, finally, his sun of life went down in his youth: but brother Paddock remains with us still.

This year, while these brethren were labouring together in the vineyard of the Lord, Utica was favoured with an extraordinary revival of religion. It com-

menced on the sabbath at a quarterly meeting, which was held in the old church; thence with mighty influence the reformation spread throughout the village. An account of this revival brother Paddock communicated in a letter to the editors of the Methodist Magazine, dated "Utica, June 19, 1826." The following is an extract from his letter:—

"The first general move that was observed on the minds of the people was in the month of March last, at a prayer meeting held at the meeting-house, in the evening, after quarterly meeting. The congregation was notified, at the close of the afternoon exercises, that in the evening an invitation would be given to any who might desire an interest in the prayers of God's people, to come forward to the altar. When, however, this invitation was given, we did not expect that more than three or four persons would come forward, as we had no knowledge of more than that number who were under religious awakening. How great, then, was our surprise, when we saw more than four times that number come weeping in all the anguish of a broken spirit, and fall upon their knees at the altar of prayer!

"From this time the work went on in a powerful and glorious manner. Convictions and conversions daily multiplied. From forty to sixty persons, at a time, bowing at the altar every evening during the subsequent part of the week; and, upon one occasion, ten souls professed to find peace in believing. The meetings have, in general, been conducted in a solemn and orderly manner—in a manner calculated to give no just occasion of offence to friends or foes. The most of the different congregations in our village have shared in this gra-

cious work. In the Presbyterian Church, especially, the Lord has wrought wonders. Great union has prevailed among the different denominations:—all have appeared anxious to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

"I am not prepared, at present, to say what number have experienced a gracious change since this blessed work commenced; but I think it cannot exceed the bounds of probability when I say, between three and four hundred. Among those converted from the error of their ways were some of the most hardened sinners and daring infidels that I ever knew. Between seventy and eighty have become members of the Methodist Church. How many have joined with other denominations, I have not the means, at present, of knowing.

"About three miles from this place, on the Sauquoit Creek, between New-Hartford and Whitesborough, God has also been carrying on a gracious work of reformation among the people. In the course of the last five or six months a society has been raised up, consisting of sixty-five members. Indeed, it may be said, that almost the whole neighbourhood has been converted to God! So glorious a work of religion I scarcely ever knew.

"In Frankfort, three or four miles from this place, a good work of reformation is now prevailing.—Many there have been raised up to testify that God has power on earth to forgive sins. In short, such a season of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit has, I believe, never before been experienced in this part of our country."

CHAPTER XIV.

Twelve years—York Mills—Church erected—Great reformation—Remarkable case—Painful occurrence—Regulations—Secular business and afflictions—An incident—Manlius station—A work commenced—An atheist—Remarks on afflictions—Reading sermons—The present age—Dr. Fisk—Two examples—The tombs—The future.

In passing through those departed years I have omitted many occurrences, interesting as they were in character, fearing that I should burden the reader, and swell the Narrative beyond the original design; so, by a rapid transit, we are brought on to the close of another four years. At this time my labour came to a termination on this charge. Twelve years, in succession, I had sustained a laborious and responsible office in the church: and, then, I deliberately came to the conclusion that I would ask for a station in some section of the work less encumbered with toil and anxiety. I was induced to do so, partly from a belief that my physical powers required a relaxation from such exposure and severe labour as I had been subjected to for many years.

There was a neighbourhood in that region, now called *York Mills*, a large manufacturing village, which was then only a small sequestered place. The plan, however, was then not only originated which would necessarily make it populous, and a place of notoriety, but the work of building was actually in progress. Moreover, during the revivals of religion that year, a small society had been formed there, which was in a

prosperous condition, though the greater part of the members were young converts. William N. Pearne, a local preacher, who came from New-York a short time before, had settled there; at whose house social meetings were occasionally held. (Himself and two of his sons are now travelling preachers.) The labours of this pious brother contributed very much toward the advancement of religion in the neighbourhood. The doctrine of holiness was his favourite topic, on which he often dwelt with ardour in his public discourses. He claimed the knowledge of the blessing by experience; therefore he was enabled to preach the doctrine truly and experimentally.

The prospect that this isolated spot would soon become an active village; the importance of establishing a permanent society there, at its commencement, that it might grow with the increasing population, were considerations which led me to view this place as a promising missionary field for the operation of ministerial effort:—to preach the gospel, superintend the society, and erect a house of worship, would be work enough for any man, and glorious work too. So my attention was drawn toward this place. I felt ready and willing to stand in the gap, and take on my own shoulders the agency of this gospel enterprise, though some of my brethren in the ministry deemed the undertaking rather visionary. Nevertheless, at the session of the conference, which was held June 7, 1826, pursuant to my purpose, I requested the bishop to appoint me there, which was accordingly done. The appointment, however, considered in a pecuniary point of view, was not a desirable one; still that cir-

cumstance was not a formidable obstacle in my way; lucrative motives had of course no influence in the formation of this design; I was willing to trust divine Providence for my living. To benefit the society and lay a foundation for its future prosperity were my ruling objects, which I believed, through the majesty of truth and grace, would be effected; and fortunately I was not disappointed in the results.

On entering the charge, Mr. Walcott, the agent of a manufacturing company, furnished me with a tenement without charge, and lightened my burden otherwise. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, a gentleman and a Christian: his kindness to me, during the time in which I resided there, will be remembered with emotions of unfeigned respect and gratitude.

Before the establishment was filled with machinery, we occupied one of the apartments for a meeting place; but this accommodation being limited to a certain time, we were soon brought to the necessity of making an effort to build a church. The society not being able to do much for themselves, we were obliged to look to the benevolence of the inhabitants, generally, for aid. Moreover, all the male members in the society were under contracts and engagements, so that they could not appropriate any part of their time to obtain contributions, or to superintend the building. I saw immediately where the burden would fall: I was obliged to be agent and building committee, and manage the whole concern for the society. At the beginning, the proprietors of the establishment assured us of a building lot, and five hundred dollars besides. With this encouragement, I went on soliciting

subscriptions through the neighbourhood, contracted for the materials, and engaged mechanics to do the work. The timber for the sills of the building was drawn upon the spot, and the carpenter commenced his work on this, while the other was growing in the forest, the stone for the foundation away in the quarry, and the rest of the materials to be collected; nevertheless, in sixty-five days from that time the building was completed in every part, and furnished, ready for dedication. Its horizontal dimensions were thirty-five feet by fifty, arched windows, and a gallery across the end: a small, but neatly-finished church. Besides overseeing the work, I collected the subscriptions, paid off the workmen, and when the house was done the society was called together, according to the provisions of law, and trustees appointed.

On the day in which the house was dedicated we had an interesting, joyful season. The spirit of the Lord was there, and filled his temple with peace and love. The pious worshippers realized that it was good for them to be there, while sinners saw in the light of truth the sinfulness of their hearts. From that day until the sitting of conference, and throughout the following year, (I was on the station two years,) the God of reformation dwelt among the people, like the abiding cloud in the camp of Israel; so that there were some seeking for salvation, while others were rejoicing that they had found the blessing. It was pleasing to see them all conformed to the gospel of Christ, and the discipline of the church, some of whom had experienced the blessing of perfect love; and others were striving to enter into the same joyful

state. Indeed, the society, viewed in its entire character, was probably at that time as devout and holy as any society I had ever seen: they appeared truly to walk with God in faith, and abounded in Christian unity. It was delightful to see them in their devotions, and to hear them speak of Christ, redeeming love, and heaven.

At one time an extraordinary influence was moving among the people, producing a clear indication that the Lord was about to work more miracles of grace there. The *agent,* in passing through the establishment, noticed some of the younger class, with others in his employ, grouped together in small companies, conversing and weeping in great distress of mind, being too much excited to perform their regular routine of work. The pious *agent* saw clearly that this work was the effect of a supernatural cause: having no disposition to oppose the power and work of God, he left them, and came up to the office where I, fortunately, happened to be at that time. He immediately gave me an account of the excitement in the factory, and respectfully requested me to go with him there. Accordingly, without hesitation, I went with him to the apartment where the excitement first appeared; and there, with anxious feelings, I beheld the moving scene. A general seriousness was apparent; some were so deeply affected that they could not properly attend to their work. What could be done at such a momentous time, was the question. Wisdom and piety were sufficient to direct in this case; the God of salvation must be reverenced and obeyed. Immediately, according to the *agent's* direction, the gate was shut; and the whirling machinery suddenly became motionless and still as the chamber of death:

then these gloomy operators were invited into one of the apartments, where a religious exercise was designed to be opened. A congregation was soon collected; and after I had exhorted them to call on the Lord in faith, and cast their burdened souls on his promises and efficacious atonement, we kneeled down and prayed for these trembling penitents. This was a new and unexpected scene in the factory, and it was as affecting as it was new. When the exercise was brought to a close, the penitents and the Christian brethren were requested to meet at a private house to resume the devotions. Soon, at the place appointed, we were assembled again, and the Lord was pleased to favour us there with salvation, peace, and glory. This sudden and convincing work of grace widened the influence of religion in the neighbourhood, and strengthened and gladdened the hearts of the righteous.

There was a certain man employed in the machine-shop, who was an open enemy to God and godliness; he carried a carnal, infidel heart, under the specious doctrine of Universalism. He had employed his wit and enmity in opposing the work of God and the reformation from their commencement: even he would have rejoiced to see our house of worship in a heap of ruins—as he acknowledged afterward. As I was standing in the office on a certain day, this man came in, and was passing through the office, which opened into the street—he had left his work on account of mental agitation, which had come upon him suddenly; but that fact was unknown to me at the time. As he entered the door, I noticed an unusual sadness clouding his countenance; the thought instantly rushed into

my mind, that, probably, the Spirit of God had touched his heart. I stepped forward and gave him my hand, with an intention to learn, if possible, the cause of his gloominess; but he seemed to anticipate my design, and said, immediately, "I cannot talk with you now." So I let him pass without accomplishing my purpose. He went directly home, and entered his own barn, where he commenced calling upon God for mercy. I saw him again in the course of the day, and we conversed awhile together on the subject of religion; and, according to his request, a number of his pious neighbours came to his house in the evening, to unite with him in prayer at the throne of grace; and immediately, after I had closed the opening petition, this poor awakened sinner began to pray for himself: at that juncture his father and brother came into his mind, who were enemies to religion, as himself had been. So with an anxious heart, and a view of the ruinous consequences of sin, he began to pray for them in the following manner: "O Lord, have mercy on my father and brother, who are on the road to hell," &c. His brother was present. It was truly affecting to hear him pray; his words and actions were all perfect specimens of the honesty and sincerity of his heart. The Spirit of God had convinced him that the wages of sin is death; and as soon as his enmity was subdued, by the power of convicting grace, his erroneous opinions vanished away, and left him with a firm belief in the doctrines of the Bible—the future judgment, rewards and punishments, &c. In a few days this penitent man was brought into the kingdom of grace, which caused much joy on earth and in heaven above.

One of the superintendents in the weaving department was a prominent, active member in the society, highly esteemed by his brethren, and much respected in the neighbourhood. One day, while the machinery was in operation, he was standing on the top of a loom reaching up, in the act of placing a strap on the drum, when, unfortunately, he lost the management of it, and then, with a turn, it caught his arm on the square iron shaft, which was whirling with velocity: deprived of foothold, he hung suspended there by his arm till it was torn off below the elbow; then his agonized body fell upon the floor, while his mangled limb remained on the shaft above. Some of his children were frightened spectators of the awful scene. The mangled sufferer was carried home alive, endured the pain of amputation, and a hope was entertained for awhile that he would recover; but, being vitally injured, he died soon afterward in the full assurance of immortal happiness. This shocking occurrence was deeply felt, both in the society and throughout the neighbourhood; all appeared to sympathize with the afflicted family, who were suddenly bereaved of a pious husband and an affectionate father.

The system adopted and carried into execution, in the management of this establishment, was admirable. A good moral character was necessary for those who desired to obtain employment there; and on the discovery of any open obliquity in their conduct, unless prevented by signs of repentance, they were immediately dismissed. As a natural consequence of this moral strictness, no place in the county with the same number of inhabitants was equal to it in morality or

piety: therefore it was not discreditable for any person, who wished to labour, to be employed in that establishment.

I spent two years in this station very pleasantly, and saw the object which I had in view fully accomplished: the society was greatly enlarged, built up in truth and holiness, and permanently established with a commodious house of worship. This early labour laid the foundation of a useful and respectable station in the conference, which has been enjoyed, since that time, by the servants of the Lord, who, according to the order of the church, have succeeded each other in the work.

There were two small mercantile houses in the village at that time, one of which the owner wished to sell; and I was solicited to purchase it in order to initiate my oldest son in the business, who was still suffering under the effects of his former illness, quite unable to endure hardship. After consulting some confidential friends, and weighing the undertaking carefully, I was inclined to think that I could see the hand of Providence working in the design, and preparing the way before me. Accordingly I made the contemplated purchase, and soon after the house was opened for the transaction of business. My son being young and inexperienced, the burden of the concern rested on my hands, which involved me, unavoidably, in more care and perplexity than I had anticipated; besides imposing a heavy tax on my time. I endeavoured, however, to preach the gospel, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. But the business continuing to embarrass my mind, I was at length brought

to the conclusion, that I had probably taken an injudicious and unfortunate step. Although my motives were good, I found in the experiment that the blessing of Heaven did not attend the enterprise; therefore, in a regular way, the concern was brought to a close as expeditiously as possible; which, in the end, was attended with a great loss to me. But it was only a worldly loss—a common occurrence in this eventful state of existence. Besides, I buried an infant son there—two were still left, Charles and Philander. Moreover, the devil, who crept into the bowers of the ancient paradise in a crooked reptile, intruded himself there in my way in another convenient form, which occasioned much affliction for awhile; but after the elf was conquered I went on in the work of the ministry, with untarnished credentials, rejoicing in God, resolved through grace to carry away, if possible, some of the strong pillars of Satan's kingdom. Yea, why should not a Christian rejoice: he stands justified before God, and is assured that his "*light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for* him *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*"

The following paragraph is copied from the Triumph of Truth.

AN INCIDENT.

— I know him well, by thousands he was known,
'Mid friends and joyful scenes his lot was thrown;
'Tween want and wealth his peaceful Eden stood,
His life was ardent, and his object good;
His castle, Truth,—nor evil he believed,
In sunbeams lurk'd, and wanton'd unperceived:
Reliance strong, on confidential things,
Precluded doubt;—but happiness has wings!

A change came on more dreary than the tomb,
And whelm'd his paradise in wintry gloom.
I saw the rush, the anguish of his soul,
While desolations swept beyond control:
His hopes were wreck'd, his schemes in chaos toss'd,
And sighs and tears proclaim'd that all was lost.
But calm in faith arose his smitten form,
By Heaven sustain'd, triumphant in the storm!
O, Truth eternal! O, transporting *theme!*
True bliss of mortals—earthly bliss a dream!
When friendship fails, and life receives a shock,
Here is firm footing, *this* is solid rock;
It wants not power propitious aid to lend,
A guardian, prompter, and unchanging friend.

This year I was stationed in Manlius, a pleasant village in Onondaga county. The inhabitants there were generally courteous and kind, which made them agreeable and happy in their social relations. A society of our denomination had been formed there some time in the early reformations in this country; and among its leading members I found a number of my old acquaintances, who showed me much kindness on my arrival there. Plain, practical godliness, and unfeigned friendship, formed the leading features in the character of the society; empty, superfluous show, they left to the vain world to aspire after and enjoy. Indeed, to be good and righteous in the sight of God is glory enough for a disciple of the meek and prideless Saviour. So I found myself happily situated there; surrounded by friends, where I could labour and rest, enjoy both sociality and solitude; besides, we were favoured that year with many refreshing seasons from the presence of the Lord; and in one revival, the

church was greatly strengthened by the accession of some living, faithful members.

Although I had an ordinary amount of ministerial labour to perform, there was much time left for study; and there I matured the design to write a work, comprising sacred, moral, and sentimental subjects, to leave in the world, as an agent, to speak for me after my physical organs shall be inert and silent in the grave. The Triumph of Truth, or the Vindication of Divine Providence, was the title, under which I designed to imbody the thoughts selected and arranged for the work. It being easy and natural for me to express my ideas in verse, hence that mode of composition was preferred; besides, I could make the work more condense and comprehensive:—though to some not so acceptable, yet to others it would be more pleasing on that account. Although it was commenced there, and certain parts of it were written before the close of the year, still it was not entirely consummated till several years afterward. To execute it according to my intention, required much mental labour, and employed my odd moments; still the labour afforded me a great degree of pleasure, conscious that I was doing a sacred duty. I wrote not merely to amuse the reader, but to impress the inquiring mind with useful, true, and interesting things: to aid the cause of truth was the ruling motive. In the year 1838 the work was published in New-York; and the edition, containing twenty-five hundred copies, was taken off; then, after I had carefully revised the work, and made some improvements in it, I transferred the copyright to the agents of the Methodist Book Con-

cern in New-York, where it is now published. If the reader, in following this *Narrative*, should not become too weary, I hope that he will take the pains to go through the *Triumph of Truth* also: for that work is merely an incident connected with the author's life: there he will discover many interesting things which cannot be found here. The following paragraph is an extract from that work, and is introduced here hoping that it might meet the eye of an avowed atheist, who resided in Manlius while I was on that station:—he was an open, vile, daring blasphemer.

Yes, everything that is reports its Cause,
And gives vibration to the grand applause:
Above, below, around, in all the same,
One general concert through all nature's frame.
The rolling ocean, restless, ambient air,
Responsive thunder, and a God declare!
Each vernal bloom that grows by nature's aid,
The noontide radiance, and the midnight shade—
Each grain of sand, each drop of sparkling dew,
All that the touch can feel, or eye can view,
With every life that roves the hill or plain,
That mounts in air, or swims the sounding main,
A Cause declares; while every star that glows
In boundless space a great Designer shows.
Yes, tongues innumerable resound abroad
This Bible truth, *There is—there is a God!*
Thus nature lectures through the earth and skies,
By night and day, to make the scorner wise.
A God! a God!—inflates each melting tone,—
She tells our duty, and pursues her own.
Hark! tones uncouth I hear, which reason wounds,
And God denies!—How atheism sounds!
O, horrid name!—a prodigy of ill!
A monster born, and is a monster still:

A citizen at large, a scoffer walks,
Assembles with the crowds, and laughs and talks;
Has claim to age, attendant oft at school,
But truth he scorns—was advertised a fool!
Blind as the mole that ploughs the passive sod,
In gloom he creeps, and howls, "There is no God!"
O, what deformity! blind offspring of the brain!
Conceived in madness, in some demon's reign.
Lo, this strange elf is nowhere to be found
But on our globe!—our earth is monstrous ground!
Go through all worlds, where faith and reason dwell,
Inquire in heaven, and ask the learn'd in hell,
Where atheism prowls! They all will point to earth,
This murky planet; here it had its birth,
And here it dwells:—absurd, the *fiends* declare:
The damn'd believe, and devils tremble there!
O, fearful sight! to see a scoffer rise,
Insult his reason, and blaspheme the skies!
Where light and truth in demonstrations roll
To flash conviction through the reasoning soul;
Where nature stands, and pleads her Author's cause,
Shows deep designs inwoven in her laws;
Unlocks her starry hall, in night's still hour,
To give bright lectures on Almighty power;
Employs her million tongues to wake his shame,
And sheds upon him tears of liquid flame;
Gives thunder voice, to lightning speed and glare,
To plead with eloquence, and truth declare;
Trumpets, in winds, to make him understand,
And points, with sunbeams, to the Almighty's hand;
Compels the trees to wave their arms and nod,
As he goes by, and sound,—*There is a God!*
See how the plants, that wide creation grace,
Expand their blooms, and laugh him in the face!
The brutes rebuke him—instinct speaks by laws,
Hence every stinging fly demands its cause.
The untaught goose, that swims the turbid stream,
With taunting gabble mars the atheist's theme.

It must be acknowledged, that the Christian religion does much to improve the moral condition of the world: there lies the field of its operation. It was not designed to prevent the natural or incidental calamities connected with our present, mortal state. It is, however, a consoling consideration, that, by the economy of nature and Providence, many of these evils, which are denominated misfortunes, are turned into blessings in an unexpected manner, even in this life. Some, merely by losses, and some by other incidental afflictions, have been excited to greater diligence in their callings; become more useful members in society, and greater benefactors to mankind. This reflection teaches us not to repine or lament over the ills that befall us here, but submit cheerfully to bear these occurrences which we have not power to control. Uninterrupted prosperity is evidently not suited to this relative state of existence. If we never had been afflicted ourselves, we should not be prepared, with proper knowledge or feelings, to sympathize with those who are in affliction:—experimental knowledge is indeed correct knowledge. Besides, the Christian, who is destined to pass through great tribulations here, will have his reward in the other world.

While on a visiting excursion I heard a certain minister preach, who had obtained some popularity in the world. So people are formed with different tastes; and every one claims the right to pass judgment on all pulpit performances. Without demurring, I let them all enjoy their own opinions, reserving to myself always the same privilege. The sermon, in itself considered, was very good; it was all written

out for the occasion; and was read without any apparent emotion, and without any visible effect: indeed, it was too cold to be congenial with my temperament. In fact, I never felt disposed to countenance the practice of reading sermons; and probably I never shall. I acknowledge, however, that instruction may be communicated in that way; but an assembly cannot be moved or awakened by such performances. To affect an audience the speaker must be affected himself; the truth that he delivers must come from his heart, accompanied with a tender, pious concern for his hearers. So, by the laws of sympathy, a speaker's emotions operate as conductors of sentiments to the feelings of his hearers:—mind operates on mind. Much depends on the preacher's appearance: his mental efforts and feelings will be exhibited expressively, in his exterior —the attitude; the animated, earnest countenance; the cast of the speaking eye; the modulation of the voice; the accompanying motion of the hand; all act as auxiliaries in conducting his emotions to the minds of his listening auditors. But these exterior things must not be performed mechanically; for every appearance of affectation is frigid and disgusting. The whole action and manner of the speaker must be easy and natural, the spontaneous results of the truthful sentiments which he is delivering. The thoughts, in the subject under consideration, should suggest and control the action and tones of the speaker; but this cannot be done unless he has the subject glowing in his own soul. There lies, in part, the great secret in speaking powerfully and effectually. He who reads his discourses labours under many disadvantages: he

cannot have the proper feeling; he cannot throw the powers of his soul into the subject, while his eye and thoughts are necessarily drawn to the written composition formed in his study.

In common conversation, every person is necessarily an extemporaneous speaker; which pleasing exercise is readily performed, in social circles, without any embarrassment. So any person, who can think clearly, can, by practice, express his thoughts extemporaneously, before a mixed multitude. This was the way the apostle Peter preached at the house of Cornelius. He heard, he saw, he felt; and he opened his mouth and spoke as he thought, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Piety and grace in the preacher's heart will originate feeling; feeling, prayer, and reading, will supply him with thought; and the daily habit of speaking what he thinks will enable him to deliver his discourses correctly, feelingly, powerfully, and effectually. But reading sermons will never convert sinners—will not produce reformations, nor aid the work of religious revivals. The Indian thought that he could preach,—"My heart," he said, "is full of preach." That is the secret; the spirit of the sermon must be in the preacher's heart; and out of the abundance of his heart he can speak readily, and with majesty. This mode of preaching, together with a glowing piety, has been the cause which has made the Methodist ministers so successful in their labours. These unpretending, pious operators, have been considered, by many, as a strange class of men. Through divine grace, in a plain, honest, zealous, and unaffected way, they have accomplished wonders in the moral world.

But if these men should turn their eye from the track of their Master, become disgusted with zealous preaching and plain dealing, trust in their literary acquirements, and seek for fame, wealth, and popularity, they would lose all their secret strength, and become weak as Samson shorn of his locks.

If the custom of reading sermons should be introduced into our church, it is probable that some in community would consider it a great improvement; the practice being in accordance with their educational views. Nevertheless, the pious members of our church will be slow to relinquish their long-established usages, which have been everywhere attended with the approbation of Heaven. Some of our worthy members have been suspicious that our literary institutions would have a tendency to lead the young preachers into the practice of reading their sermons, and their hearers thereby would be lulled into stupidity, and lose their zeal. And these serious apprehensions have originated prejudices in their minds against our institutions of learning, causing them to withhold their patronizing influence. But every member in our church ought to know that this *unnecessary* practice is not the result of sound learning; learning qualifies a minister to speak readily and eloquently: the erroneous practice springs from an early habit of depending on written compositions. It is, however, acknowledged, that the practice has many respectable advocates; but their example does not establish the propriety or usefulness of the usage. The practice is not authorized by Christ or his apostles—they did not *read* their sermons; and, surely, in these critical days, we must

be careful, and not depart one step from the holy track of primitive usages—we must keep in the "*succession.*"

The present age is undoubtedly very aspiring; and no country feels the workings of this spirit more than our own: the genius of our government affords strong incentives to ambition; and fosters that independent *feeling* which is interwoven with the educational habits of every class of community; the ultimate practical tendency of which is to level the proper distinctions in society, which are originated by the laws of nature and order. This prominent feature in our national character is frequently noticed by travellers; and it is obvious to every critical eye. No traveller, probably, was more eminently qualified to judge correctly respecting these things than Dr. Fisk, who was both a Christian and a scholar, closely wedded to his own country and its institutions; still he was convinced that we had our foibles. The following remarks, relating to this subject, are copied from Dr. Fisk's Travels in Europe, which the reader will undoubtedly be pleased to find inserted in this work:—

"I was pleased at the deference paid to seniority and to office in the British Wesleyan Conference; and not only here, but in all the social and domestic relations of this country. Honesty and candor oblige me to say it is the contrast of what we see in America; and it is but candid to acknowledge that this difference is doubtless owing, in a great measure, to the difference in the influence of the political institutions of each country respectively upon social and domestic habits. We gain nothing in favour of republicanism to claim for it what does not belong to it; and we are great

losers by shutting our eyes to its unfavourable bearings. Everything has its defects, and the height of human perfection is to fix upon that which has the fewest imperfections; and then, instead of shutting our eyes to the imperfections of our chosen system, it becomes us to know them well, and provide against them. Where everything is carried by vote, and every man's vote, whether young or old, rich or poor, ignorant or learned, is of equal value with that of any other; and where, too, these votes are courted by flattering the besotted and ignorant, and *organizing*, and *setting forward* the young and inexperienced in the great affairs of the nation, we could expect little else than that the tendency would be to the *levelling system*, to the prostration of all distinctions, not only the arbitrary and oppressive, but also the natural and salutary; the guards, therefore, should be on that side. Where men do not come up to the natural mark, there is no danger of their passing beyond. But we have come up, in the constitution of society, to the full point of popular and equal privileges; and a man must be but half of a philosopher not to be able to infer, from the very nature of things, that the press will be onward toward *radicalism* and *agrarianism;* to a levelling, in fact, of those distinctions of respect for the aged and the wise which even savage life recognises. For when civilized communities break over their just social bounds, they rush into a worse state than exists in original barbarism; they have refined upon theory until they have stifled the voice of those gregarious instincts that constitute the rude elements of savage or barbarous clanship. That we have, in our social

constitutions, come fully up to the line in this direction, shows our courage, if not our wisdom; and the only way now to sustain ourselves is to know our exposed sides, and guard against them; here is one point of exposure, and here we should set our double guard, and this is to be done mainly in the domestic circle. We must cease to flatter our children, and to press them forward into early public notoriety; and in more extended associations we must be cautious how we spoil our youth of promise, who are shooting up from the dust, under the patronage of our genius-fostering institutions, by too much flattery, and by giving them a premature pre-eminency. Let them rise; it is well that we have thrown off those shackles of rising genius which, in Europe, make every case of elevation from the lower grades of society a phenomenon; but it is not well that we guard so little against any peculiar evils incident to such a state of society. I have said more on this subject than I should have done but for the conviction that the evil is a growing one; and for the known fact that, when it is seen and charged upon us by Europeans, we deny it."

The following examples, though of trivial moment, and probably in the estimation of some not worth noticing, will, however, serve to show the workings of this prevailing evil, which is so ingeniously touched by the doctor's pointed remarks.

A certain aged minister, who had spent the greater part of his life in the itinerant ministry, came to an annual conference as a visiter: in former days he had preached in the village where the conference was held, and laid the foundation of Methodism there. Besides, the

leading members in that body were acquainted with the old preacher; some of whom had sprung up in the field of his labours; and it is presumed, that they thought themselves not wanting in principles of refinement; still they did not extend to that aged man of God any public token of courtesy. He was not invited to preach, or even to take a seat in the altar at any time during the whole session of the conference. I was well acquainted with him, and had good reasons to believe, that his mental powers were then as strong and vivid as they ever were—he would not mount the *rostrum* with a skip if he could, still he could preach like a son of thunder. It is presumed that this *designed* neglect did not spring from any want of confidence in the aged preacher:—his reputation was established. They shook hands with him, and even called him *father*—what an honour!

The other case was as follows:—An elderly travelling minister, while far from home, went to a place of worship to hear a young man of some learning and notoriety preach. When he entered the building, which was merely a school-house, he saw a chair by the table for the use of the preacher, who had not yet arrived. The old minister passed by the chair,—as any polite man of sense would do,—and took a seat on a low, uncomfortable bench, near the table. Soon the young preacher came in, who, by the by, was acquainted with the aged minister; and nodded to him as he came along, and seated himself at the table. The young preacher soon commenced the exercise, but he did not offer the man of years the chair, though it stood useless by him while he was speaking; and after he

had finished his discourse, and given liberty for the brethren to speak, he seated himself again in the chair, and sat, tilting back with much composure and independence, thinking, probably, that everything had been done correctly, and was going on systematically; while the old preacher was thinking about the *improvements* of the age in his uncomfortable, cramped position on the low bench.

These two examples are sufficient, though many such small matters are continually occurring, which are like grains of sand in the eye, very small, but very painful. When the young men in our country become old they will be compelled to *see* these things, and *feel* them too. I use this plainness of speech that the aspiring youth in our community may see that a great evil, having an unhappy tendency, is found growing in little things, which is overlooked by too many in this literary, fine-dressing age. This "*levelling system*," as it is called, operates in minute matters with a sweeping influence, levelling all appropriate distinctions, showing no particular respect or deference to *seniority*, *experience*, or *office*. These uncourteous movements, in the heterogeneous mass of community, appear not so surprising as they do in Christian societies, where the principles and genius of the Christian religion are expected to inspire a deferential spirit, and give a more perfect mould to manners, and thereby sustain all the rational and proper distinctions in society.

Common courtesy is appropriately called the art of pleasing; and every one desires to feel the benefits of the art: it is agreeable to the eye, and grateful to

the mental sensibilities of every one, from the rustic clown to the polished courtier; and every genteel person shows his high attainments by endeavouring to please those with whom he happens to be associated. To give no occasion for offence; to try by laudable means to make every one easy and happy; to infringe on no one's rights; to render honour to whom honour is due; are the great leading principles of Christian politeness. These principles are found in the Bible, and are also taught by reason and common sense. Hence every one expects to see the charming and dignified graces of *humility* and *courteousness* exemplified in Christian communities, especially. All Christians are bound to observe this just and holy obligation, "Therefore all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

A WALK AMONG THE TOMBS.

Sequestered eminence! here I stand on the borders of two worlds; the living and the dead are in the same neighbourhood; and even now some wandering shades may be passing around me unseen. Strange emotions are excited within me as I walk over this secluded ground. Strangers and old acquaintances, who were once active in this busy world, are here occupying apartments together in these gloomy chambers; all inert and silent as the dust that covers them. O, death! this is one part of thy gloomy domain! here, amid darkness and silence, thy despotic throne is erected. Here are thy sunless halls, and the dark cells where thy victims are incarcerated. Dread con-

queror! I acknowledge that thou art commissioned by divine justice with unlimited power; and, hence, thou hast not transcended the orders of Heaven: still thy desolating power strangely affects me.

Where are my aged parents?—they are away from their former home, and I have come hither seeking them. My living friends have informed me that they are here—here they saw them last. But, O! I find them not! Here like sentinels the unfeeling monuments stand and keep incessant vigils on this gloomy height; but like the heathen gods of old, they notice not the approach of living mortals—they have no eyes to see nor ears to hear. On their polished forms are inscribed the names of my affectionate parents, telling me that they are here. My anxious spirit cries, Where—O, where?—the dying echo answers, Where? But the tongueless marble adds no more. Many months have rolled away since I saw them at their home; then they were slowly sinking under their infirmities; the world had lost all its charm to them; and with painful emotions I saw them dying by degrees. Since that hour a gloomy change has followed in the track of time; their room is deserted, and they are gone never more to return. Their spirits have ascended to the celestial world, to receive an incorruptible inheritance in the kingdom of God. Here, then, let their dust rest till the morning of the resurrection. They were converted in the year 1800, and united with the M. E. Church, in whose communion they remained during the term of forty years, living a life of faith and prayer; and at last, with perfect resignation they left this world of sorrow, and entered into their rest above.

Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

The future in mystery lies;
Our knowledge is partial indeed!
But spirits immortal are wise,
Th' arcanum of heaven they read.
How happy—how viewless—how fleet!
No longer encumber'd with clay,
Dull matter lies under their feet,
And darkness is changed into day.

The life and the glory they sought
In fullest fruition enjoy;
Their movements are speedy as thought,
And nothing their raptures annoy.
At will they can visit the sun,
And all the bright planets that glow
Explore the vast orbits they run,
And all their inhabitants know.

In stooping from regions of light,
They notice poor mortals below,
And often bend downward their flight,
To comfort them under their wo.
As ministering angels employ'd,
Attendants by day and by night;
Unnoticed they traverse the void,
And in their commission delight.

But Heaven has fix'd a decree
That keeps the departed conceal'd;
Their faces we never shall see,
Till mysteries dark are reveal'd.
Adieu, happy spirits, adieu!
Till death this partition shall rend,
Then we shall our friendship renew,
Which never—O, never shall end!

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